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L É G I S L A T I O N
K

AND THE
COMMERCE of CORN;

WHEREIN

The QUESTIONS relating to
EXPORTATION, IMPORTATION,
BOUNTIES, PROHIBITIONS,
Provisions of CORN by Public Authority, &c.,
are fully discussed.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH,

To which some NOTES are added.

L O N D O N :

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COMMITTEE OF CORN

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



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1. The above information was obtained from the files of the FBI, New York Office, dated 10/10/61.

own opinion concerning it, but I know
that it is a very good one.

To which I have added the following:

...for the ...

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

1860. LXXVI.

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OF THE

TRANSLATOR.

THE following tract was sent me some months ago by a very sensible and very worthy friend of mine from Paris. He does not tell me what is his own opinion concerning it; but I know he *was* a warm advocate for exportation; nor what is the public opinion, though it must have been received with great attention; for the *Approbation* is dated only on the 18th of *April* last, and it is the third edition which was sent me; so it has gone through three impressions in less than six months, and these the

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summer months too. That approbation breathes such liberal sentiments as do honour to the present way of thinking in France, and to the gentleman who is the licenſer of the preſs; and, as it is ſhort, I beg leave to insert it here. *I have read, by order of his lordſhip the keeper of the ſeals, a work intituled, On the Legislation and the Commerce of Corn. Though the principles contained in it appear to me to differ from thoſe announced by government on this ſubject, yet the author having confined himſelf within the bounds of a ſimple diſcuſſion, without personalities, or declamation; and as, in my opinion, truth cannot but gain by the diſcuſſion of a queſtion ſo important, I think that the printing this work cannot but be of uſe.* Paris, 18th April, 1775.

CADET DE SAINEVILLE,
Cenſor Royal.



ADVERTISEMENT.

IF we could be sure that licensers would always act on such principles, who, that has groaned over the licentiousness of the press, would not wish for the establishment of them?

WHO the author of this tract is I do not know; an answer to it, which was sent me at the same time, calls him Mr. N. and says he is a *Genevois*. Mr. N. often stands for a blank name, but there is a Mr. Necker, a *Genevois*, at Paris, and now or lately one of the most eminent bankers there, and resident, I believe, for the republic at the court of France; he may be the Author, but this is mere conjecture. When I had read the book I liked it; I thought it might be of use in England as well as in France, and I translated it; I have ventured to add a few notes to it, and here it is at the reader's service.

I HAD once some thoughts of subjoining to it the Answer which I have

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mentioned; but it appeared to me such
a wretched catch-penny performance,
though it owns that this present work
is considered as the triumph of the
opposite party, that I thought it not
worth the trouble.

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NO

ON THE
LEGISLATION
AND THE
COMMERCE of CORN.

CHAP. I.

INTRODUCTION.

THERE is no question in political oeconomy, which presents to the mind more profound and more extensive objects of meditation, than that concerning Corn; it is connected with the greatest principles of society, it leads back to the most original rights of human nature, it is impossible to be tired of studying a subject so interesting to the general welfare.

OF what avail, alas, to the happiness of the greater number of men, are all the celebrated books of morality and of philosophy ! These respectable writings, monuments of the human genius, are almost all destined to calm or to conciliate the passions ; but it is through luxury that these passions have extended, and as it were displayed themselves, under a thousand different shapes ; they seem to appertain to that class of men who, exempt from continual toil by their property, or devoting themselves to it only through ambition, flatter or wound, serve or prejudice each other, out of pride or out of vanity : continually in prey to emotions of the soul unknown to indigence, for them alone the lessons of wisdom are written, and it is they alone, likewise, who have leisure to read them.

BUT few are the truths the scope and end of whose discussion is the happiness of the multitude. To live to-day, to labour to live to-morrow ! this

is the sole concern of the most numerous class of our fellow creatures. Born without property, they have no means of sustenance, but by earning by their services a moderate part of the superfluities of the rich; and every morning they awake to the same fear, or to the same hope.

If the laws relating to the commerce of corn can assure or disturb their quiet, are there any which ought to be examined to the bottom with more care? Is there an object more worthy of attention? Is there one which touches more nearly every feeling breast? But at the same time that these considerations animate our courage, and urge our thoughts, we perceive, as we advance in this investigation, that there is no subject more abstract and more complicated.

SOMETIMES we find, flowing from the same principles, consequences absolutely different; sometimes these consequences have such a re-action, that

4 *The Legislation and the*

they seem in their turn to be a first cause; nay often, becoming better known than the principle from whence they spring, *they* alone fix the attention, and it is with difficulty that their dependance is re-established; in fine, we see contrary events, the effect of the same axioms, and belong to the same denominations, according to the degrees of extent given to their meaning, or the application made of it.

EVERY where, Truth seems to fly, or to wish to weary out, her pursuer; she seems especially to deny herself to all simple and general notions, by surrounding herself with exceptions, with reserves, and with modifications; and it is in the midst of these continual varieties that she must be sought for and seized.

THE regulations concerning corn, which seem dictated by the law of nature in one country, would throw every thing into confusion in another less fertile in soil, different in situation, and guided by opposite manners.

BUT

BUT it is not those political contrarieties alone, that perplex the choice of the best system on the commerce of corn. Cast an eye on the interior of society, and you will see every different class that composes it, look on this important object in a quite different manner; because the attention of men is under the dominion of habit; and is almost always fixed by their interest, even when they are not intentionally unjust.

THE proprietor sees nothing in corn but the fruit of his care, and the produce of the land that belongs to him; he would dispose of it, in the same manner as of his other income.

THE merchant considers this staff of life only as an article of trade; he would be at liberty to buy it and to sell it again, as his interest directs. He requires that this circulation should be subject to the general laws of commerce.

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THE people, without reflecting, but enlightened by their instinct, and commanded by their wants, look upon corn as an element, necessary to their existence ; they are on earth, they would live, they wish to be able, by their labour, to procure their subsistence ; they demand such laws and regulations as will insure it to them.

THESE three classes of men sound forth the most awful names in defence of their claims : the land-owner invokes the rights of property ; the merchant, those of liberty ; the people, those of humanity.

THOSE who live in idleness in towns, very indifferent as to questions which interest them only in a remote futurity, join confusedly the complaints of the different parties, and are almost always ready to find out, that the contrary of what is done, is what ought to be done.

THE men who meditate in their closets, filled with the praise-worthy desire of enlightening the world, but too easily

easily disposed to believe that it is always through want of abilities that an administration is imperfect, earnest to unloose the Gordian knot, establish a principle, generalize it, push it as far as it will go, and whilst they thus extend its empire, they weaken it, or they alter its nature; frequently they look with too much indifference on the care of reconciling opinions and prejudices to it; for there is a kind of abstract courage also, which, remote from men, attacks and surmounts all difficulties by the force of reason and the power of truth: nearer them, this courage staggers, and the insufficiency of those arms in which confidence was placed soon appears.

BUT whilst some in solitude abandon themselves to all the boldness of theory, the different administrators of publick affairs, sometimes give into another excess; accustomed to negotiate always with the passions of men, often obliged to combat their blindness and violence,

they have all the timidity of experience, and too easily frighten themselves at complaints and at novelties.

IT is in the midst of this continual shock of interests, of principles and of opinions, that the legislator must search for truth. Filled with an awful reverence, at the prospect of the good which he may do, and which he dares to attempt, he ought to raise himself in thought above the differing motives which agitate the community; he ought to consider it in its whole extent, and unite in his beneficence all those orders of his fellow creatures whom pride and vain pretensions disunite; above all things ought he to be the protector of that multitude of men, who have no orators to express their complaints, whose sufferings he ought to study, because their cry is never heard but in distress; who see only the present moment, and who yet can only be assisted by foresight; on whom it is impossible ever to bestow so much happiness,

piness, as to be known by them to be the author of it, or to enjoy their thankfulness; but whom it is so sweet to defend, against oppression and misfortune, without ostentation, and without reward.

C H A P. II.

GENERAL DIVISION.

WE shall treat, in the following order, the different objects of this work.

IN the First part, we shall discuss the Exportation of Corn.

IN the Second, the interior Commerce.

IN the Third, we shall examine the most known Modifications, applicable to the Commerce of Corn in general.

IN the Fourth, we shall conclude with risking our opinion, on the Law that would obviate the greatest number of inconveniencies.

THESE

THESE parts will be again subdivided into chapters. Though too slavish an attention ought not to be paid to method, one is obliged to adopt this manner in the examination of such abstract questions. Yet, whatever care has been taken, it cannot be hoped that a dissertation of this kind should be generally read. We would only invite a greater number of persons to these discussions; truth would gain, and perhaps the work would not lose by it. What is most to be feared, is to be referred to the spirit of party; an arbiter who long reigns alone, whilst the sciences are yet new; a partial and incompetent judge, who believes still more than he knows, who obstinately adheres to whatever he has caught up in the dark, who gives up nothing, because he doth not distinguish with precision, and who is seldom shaken in his opinions, because opinions become flexible, only in proportion as they are formed in doubt, and nourished by thought; never by character.

PART I.

On the Exportation of Corn.

CHAP. I.

Under what Relation must we examine the Exportation of Corn?

IS it expedient to permit, in France, a free exportation, by a permanent law?

THE œconomical writers shew no doubt on this head; and several persons, respectable by their lights and by their intentions, have adopted the same sentiment *. They all demand this liberty, in

* Several sovereign courts have embraced the same opinion. See the Representations of the parliaments of Toulouse, of Grenoble, and of Bretagne, and more recently the letter of the parliament of Toulouse to the king, which ends thus:

“ May your majesty be convinced, that nothing
“ will ever be wanting to the greatest prosperity of
“ France, but the indefinite liberty to export corn
“ to

in the name of the most sacred rights ; on it they make depend the encouragement of agriculture, and all the most precious advantages civil and political.

To chuse a side on this important question, we must necessarily consider it in its relation to the prosperity of the state.

SOCIAL institutions can have no other basis ; every law made for a nation, ought to take its source in the general good ; when force and ignorance go astray from this principle, their acts are acts of despotism, and of error ; those days are days of calamity, whose end is expected with impatience.

“ to foreign markets ; and suffer us to replace, under the eyes of your majesty, that remarkable maxim, contained in the arrêt of your majesty’s council of the 14th September last ; *That the more commerce is free, animated, and extended, the more speedily and abundantly the people are supplied.*”

C H A P. II.

In what the Prosperity of a State consists.

HAD there been but one society on earth, the prosperity of the state, and the greatest happiness of its members, had been synonymous expressions.

BUT the formation of several societies, disunited in interest and affection, soon obliged each of them to add to the care of their happiness, the solicitude necessary to preserve it.

THEN the prosperity of a state came necessarily to depend on the reunion of happiness and of strength.

THE desire of happiness had required only simple ideas, of order, of justice, and of equity; the need of strength gave successively birth to all the political combinations; and the functions of the sovereign encreased; the production of riches, labour, commerce, and industry, which in their connection with happiness

ness seemed to belong only to the caprice of personal interest, became in their relation with the publick strength an object of meditation, and of watchfulness for the government.

IT is for want of reuniting, and considering together these two conditions, essential to society, happiness, and strength, that we are apt to deviate into error.

THE minister of a despot thinks of strength only; the ardent friend of humanity forms plans for happiness only; the one requires nothing but soldiers; the other would lay prostrate all means of defence. The one stifles the thought, that strength is a scourge when it guards only misery; the other forgets that, amidst the passions of mankind, happiness without defence is a transient gale, which for an instant we enjoy, only that we may learn to regret it. The enlightened minister guards himself against these fatal errors; the edifice which he erects for happiness, he sustains by power;
he

he sighs over those political precautions, which attest to the world the ambitious restlessness of sovereigns, as the civil laws announce the unjust pretensions of private men ; but he frames his designs according to the circumstances which he cannot overcome ; happy that by his wisdom he can yet moderate those sacrifices, which the defence of the state requires from the subject.

YET let not these inconveniencies, inseparable from the establishment of societies, make us regret the life of savages in their forests ; for even in that situation, men would be obliged to moderate their desires, in order to satisfy them, and to keep by strength and watchfulness what they had acquired by skill.

It is an eternal servitude imposed on human nature to have all our enjoyments surrounded with sacrifices and contrarieties ; and social laws have possibly mitigated this condition, for by warranting to each his property, they dispence

dispenſe with the neceſſity of fighting to procure, and of having ſtrength to ſecure it. The diſquiet ſpread over all men in the ſavage life, is concentrated in the government, and ſubſiſts only between ſociety and ſociety; but then the public ſtrength is become abſolutely neceſſary, and it is by the harmony of that with the happineſs of individuals, that the proſperity of the ſtate is aſſured.

C H A P. III.

On the Reunion of Happineſs and Strength.

THERE are, doubtleſs, a great number of ſocial inſtitutions which concur to eſtabliſh the happineſs and the ſtrength of a nation; but ſeveral would appear foreign to our ſubject: ſuch are the laws of order, juſtice, and equity; thoſe which maintain morals, which excite honour and courage, which improve military diſcipline, and unfold military talents; all thoſe, in ſine, which tend to
render

render a man more expert, or more powerful, than his equal by nature.

POLITICAL œconomy doth certainly not reject the amelioration arising from all these circumstances; but obliged to admit only general views, it considers the power of a state as founded on the greatness of its riches, but still more on the number of its inhabitants; and if this number cannot increase but by the effect of a due harmony between the different classes of society, population becomes, in political œconomy, the most certain pledge of the union of happiness and strength.

C H A P. IV.

Strength depends more on Population than on Riches.

BEFORE we compare together these two great sources of power, it is of importance to shew, with precision, what is meant in this parallel, by the riches of the state.

C

FIRST

FIRST then, they are not the revenues of the sovereign; for if these revenues bear some relation to the wealth of the nation, they bear another, also, to the wisdom or unskilfulness of those who govern, who do not always proportion the imposts to the abilities of the people.

NOR can the riches of the state, as compared against population, be composed of those goods which are essentially necessary to that population; under the name of riches then, in this light, cannot be comprehended, either the land which feeds man, or the stock in implements, in cattle, in buildings, in seed; all these kinds of goods are, as it were, a part of population, for man cannot be separated from his subsistence.

THUS the only riches which form a power distinct from population, are those superabounding goods of every kind, which are amassed through time in a society, and which, capable of being
exchanged

exchanged for the services of foreigners, may augment the public strength.

THESE goods now consist principally in the precious materials, such as gold and silver; because these metals are become the common measure of exchanges, and the certain means of acquiring, on every side, the productions of the earth, and the labours of men.

THERE are states where those riches encrease, together with the number of inhabitants.

THERE are others where those riches cannot be acquired, but at the expence of population.

LET us suppose a nation to be still savage, and in its infancy, or to have received nothing from nature but corn, and some productions common to all other countries, and that its inhabitants distinguish themselves by no peculiar kind of industry; it is plain silver, and the other precious riches, can be introduced into that nation, only in exchange for its corn: there will be so many the

fewer men in it, as there are fed elsewhere by that corn exported; and it must deprive itself of a part of the population of which it was susceptible, in order to acquire riches.

THERE are nations more fortunate, which augment their riches by increasing the number of their people; such is France, which by the varied industry of her inhabitants, and by the culture of some valuable productions, peculiar to her soil, pays for all the goods of the universe which she wishes to have, and, besides that, draws into her lap, every year, a prodigious sum of gold and silver.

WITHIN the last ten years, France has imported more corn than she has exported; and yet, within these ten years, she is become possessor of near one half of the precious metals which have been amassed in Europe during that period*.

CERTAINLY,

* There hath come from America, for ten years past, from one hundred and ten to one hundred and twenty

CERTAINLY, in such a country, population contributes to riches; but if those riches could be still augmented by the sale of the necessaries of life, such augmentation of fortune acquired at

twenty millions French annually *. About fifteen millions † have gone annually to the Indies and China, by the commerce of France, Holland, Sweden, and Denmark: remains then annually in Europe about a hundred millions ‡.

France has coined about forty-three millions \$, one year with another, during these ten years, and this money remains entirely in France; for so long as this kingdom receives fresh sums in uncoined metals, coined metals, which cost two per cent. for coinage, cannot be exported out of it. Such a commerce is impossible; or if some of the coin goes out one moment, it must return the next.

Now if to these forty-three millions we add seven for new plate, &c. which seems moderate, there are in all fifty millions || of the precious metals annually accumulated in France; so we are not in danger of any considerable mistake, in supposing that France receives almost half of those metals which are amassed in Europe.

* From 4,812,500l. to 5,250,000l. sterling, at 31 d. half-penny per crown.

† 656,250l. sterling.

‡ 4,375,000l. sterling.

\$ 1,881,250l. sterling.

|| 2,187,500l. sterling.

the expence of population would neither be wise nor politic.

RICHES and population are two sources of power, but population is the much more certain strength.

If the moveable riches, whereof the different members of a state can dispose, were sufficient to constitute power, the republic of Genoa would be of more weight in Europe than the kingdom of Sweden; but this kind of riches concur to the national strength only by the means of imposts; and the proprietors of those riches hide them, disguise them, or go with them into other countries, whenever the state demands too great a proportion of them.

BESIDES, those riches, even in the hands of the sovereign, become an additional strength to the population of an empire, only so far as by treaties with other powers it obtains from them either auxiliary troops, or permission to levy recruits in their dominions; whereas a numerous population is a strength in itself,

itself, independant of any compact; and in the present circumstances of Europe, where the perfection of discipline and military talents puts armies in motion with prodigious rapidity, population acquires a new degree of superiority over money, as *that* can be converted into an augmentation of strength, only by the more or less tedious means of negotiations.

IF a system of policy should at length prevail, which should acknowledge no law of nations, but force, forthwith the belligerent powers would observe no rule in their hostilities; they would every where exact what they wanted, instead of paying for it; and riches would become still less essential to power: for as the precious metals are not convertible into the things really useful or agreeable to man, but through the effect of a convention; so, in proportion as the spirit of convention shall become enfeebled among sovereigns, money will be less necessary for conquest, or for defence.

IN fine, there are countries where riches will never accumulate; there are others whither they will always spontaneously flow. In vain does a state gain money by commerce, or by the sale of its productions; this money follows the lot of the persons who possess it; and never shall we see great proprietors of moveable riches continue long under a despotic government, or an inclement sky. The men who dispose of much money, are desirous of obtaining all the advantages which it can procure; and as they can transport it wherever pleasure calls them, they will always be attracted towards the temperate climates, towards the countries where arts and sciences flourish, where the manners of the inhabitants are gentle, where society is easy, where the laws are sage, where prejudices have the least sway. 'Tis in the very small number of such countries that money will always center; therefore the anxiety of their governments should be principally directed

rected towards the encouragement of population, which, in the present state of politics, will become more and more the real strength of nations, and which in France will never clash with the encrease of her riches.

C H A P. V.

The Relation which Riches bear to Happiness.

IT availeth not that a country is powerful, if its inhabitants are not happy; for strength is no otherwise a good, than as it secures happiness. So, after having examined the influence of riches and of population on the power of a state, it remains that we consider the relation which these two great circumstances bear to the publick felicity.

THE inhabitants of a country favoured by nature, enjoy the fertility of its soil, and the variety of its productions; but these goods are independant

of riches, in the sense that we here use the word; that is to say, the inhabitants of France would equally enjoy the yearly renewal of the fruits of the earth, although fifty or sixty millions in coin, plate, and diamonds, was not annually amassed in that kingdom.

THE French nation would not be the less happy if the hundred thousand tuns of wine which they sell to foreigners, were consumed among themselves; *this* pleasure would be well worth *that* of hoarding up the thirty millions which they receive in exchange.

THE quantity of money accumulated in a country, bears then no direct relation to its happiness: this annual introduction of metals is the effect of a free exchange of commodities; it is the general result of commerce. But let us suppose a nation composed of proprietors without oeconomy, or more sensible to real enjoyments, than to the power of enjoying, represented by money; such a nation would spend all its revenues,

venues, and would require from foreigners a greater quantity of their productions; it would keep more of its own, and consequently would receive less money; but all its desires being satisfied, it would be equally happy.

BUT farther, if the social system, which has always been looked upon as the most conformable to general felicity, if the equality of property could, all at once, be introduced and maintained; the state where this chimerical project should be realized, however favoured by nature, would no longer receive money from foreign countries, yet such a society would indisputably be the most worthy of envy.

LET us lay open this idea. There are two thousand millions of money* in France; the fourth or the sixth part would possibly be sufficient to carry on the exchange of commodities; the rest is a treasure, more or less transitory, in the hands of the different proprietors in

* 87,500,000 l. sterling.

the kingdom, that is, a pledge which constantly represents the power of acquiring other goods. But what is it that gives such an extent to this power, and this desire of hoarding? It is the inequality of fortunes.

THE incertitude of desires, sure companion of abundance, necessarily occasions those metals to be earnestly sought after, which give time for comparison and choice, which procure the means of converting a perishable superfluity into a permanent value, and thus console the rich amidst all the disgusts of satiety, by the confused image of all those goods whereof money gives the hopes.

LET US now consider a country divided into small properties, a division which procures to the greatest number of men, the most simple comforts and conveniencies of life, but every where prevents the existence of superfluity; each then consuming the productions of his patrimony, the means of making exchanges with foreigners become
so

so narrowed that it would be no longer possible to ask money from them, because they would not become debtors; it is the hard lot of the poor, the greater number of men, confined to bare necessities, that puts into the power of the rich, a superabundance of goods of every kind, which they desire to convert into money; and that is effectuated by commerce with other nations.

THESE great inequalities, though inevitable, are nothing the less afflicting to humanity; how then can the immoderate introduction of money into a country, the consequence of such a system, ever be a certain sign of the publick felicity?

C H A P. VI.

*The Relation which Population bears to
Happiness.*

IS the encrease of the number of men prejudicial to the publick happiness? That is the question we are to examine.

PROPRIETORS cannot be hurt by an encrease of population; inasmuch as by the social laws, no one is admitted to a share in a property, except by free convention, or by the right of inheritance established by law.

PROPRIETORS, thus secured against any involuntary distribution of their fortune, can only reap advantages from the encrease of population; thus, suppose a proprietor had destined the produce of two hundred acres of land to purchase the work of ten artisans, and that this concession procured each of them good clothing, comfortable food, and some conveniences; but when the
number

number of men is augmented, the competition arising from thence, enables the proprietor to reduce the recompence of labour to meer necessities; then with the same quantity of acres he hires double, perhaps, the number of workmen, and thus procures to himself new enjoyments, since this encrease of labour is wholly devoted to his will, and to his fancy.

BUT if it is proved that proprietors are advantaged by the encrease of population, it may possibly be more difficult to reconcile with this advantage, the happiness of those who live by the labour of their hands; since, as we have just now remarked, it is on account of their number and their rivalry, that they obtain no more than meer necessities for their recompence.

THE encrease of population dooms, no doubt, the industrious class of mankind to many privations; but that impetuous attraction which nature has implanted between the sexes, and that
love

love wherewith she inspires them for the fruits of their union, are the causes of the multiplication of men upon the earth; these sentiments rule over the poor, as over the rich; these no law can suppress, and if it could, that law would be barbarous. Every human being loves better to share a morsel of bread with his mate and his offspring, than to live alone on varied dainties. It is thus population spreads, and by spreading inevitably augments the number of the indigent.

LET us not, however, deceive ourselves concerning this indigence: the estimates of nature are more sublime than those of men; let us beware not to calumniate her too lightly. To the laws and to the passions of men, she abandons the distribution of riches; but that of happiness she reserves in her own hands; this she has not founded on the variety of meats and the delicacy of raiment; she has not thrown into one stock, all the pleasures which she would

would divide amongst all the sons of men, she would then have given too much power to the great ones of the earth; they can, by the means of competition, reduce the man of toil to have only bread for his recompence; but they can take away from him, neither those ever-renewing wants which give a relish to the plainest food, nor that ardent thirst which calls him with pleasure to the stream, nor that sleep which sweetly recruits his exhausted body, nor that glorious sight of nature which cheers him when he awakes in the morning, nor that motion which dissipates his thoughts, nor that curiosity which agitates him, nor that warm blood which carries delight through every vein; or in fine, that hope which gilds the future, soothes the present, and comforts the heart. All these pleasures of life are out of the power of civil property; they are the property of the poor, as much, at least, as of the rich.

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UNDER

UNDER this view, two thousand men reduced to the meer necessities of life, will unitedly (if we may so speak) be in possession of a greater quantity of happiness, than one thousand men, somewhat better clothed, or more delicately fed; and such is, doubtless, the beneficent view of nature, when she entices men to encrease the human species.

THERE is a period, however, where population would stop of itself, that is when it should come to exceed the sum total of all subsistence*. Sufferings and mortalities

* One acre of corn will more than feed a man, eating nothing else; ten acres of grass would not feed him with flesh, if he could live on that without any thing else. Land will bear above twenty times the weight of potatoes as of wheat, and of cabbages above 50 per cent. a greater weight than of potatoes; the produce also of carrots and parsnips must be very great. In the greatest possible population, therefore, there would be no animals on earth but men, and all mankind must live on cabbage, potatoes, &c. and fish, and drink only water; nor can the imagination conceive how high population might rise before it would be checked by want of food, for who can tell

mortalities must then ensue; but this evil would be the effect of a plenitude of good, as a vessel filled till it overflows. This kind of misfortune is little known on earth; the scourges of heaven, and the destructive errors and passions of men, almost always stop the natural progress of population.

tell how far produce might be augmented by labour and manure? Every one knows the difference between common good culture and that bestowed on an experiment, and in this case every inch would be higher cultivated than an experimental garden plot now is: we might perhaps die for want of fresh air to breathe, before we should die for want of food to eat. *Translator's Note.*

C H A P. VII.

The Sources of Population.

THERE are republicks which are fed in a great measure with foreign corn, by means of the moveable revenues of their wealthy citizens, or by the exchange of the works of industry of their inhabitants; but great states have need of extensive resources belonging to themselves, and men cannot there multiply and perpetuate themselves but in proportion to the subsistence produced by the country itself; thus agriculture is the first source of population in such a kingdom as France.

THE second circumstance necessary to the support and extent of that population, is that the several kinds of subsistence, thus multiplied in a community, should be employed in nourishing the inhabitants who compose it.

A COUNTRY which should yield much corn, and sell some of it constantly to foreigners,

foreigners, would have an imperfect population.

A COUNTRY which should never sell any corn to foreigners, but which should not make the land produce as much as it might do, would equally have an imperfect population.

LET us now enquire what is the influence of the exportation of corn, on those two essential sources of the population of a state.

C H A P. VIII.

Constant Liberty to export Corn is not necessary to the Progress of Agriculture in France.

WERE it possible that property should be constantly divided into equal portions; every member of society possessing only an extent of land sufficient to supply his wants or the most simple conveniences; the bounty of the earth, which yields five

or six for one *, would be the only encouragement necessary to agriculture; the pressing necessity of feeding, warming, and clothing themselves, would then suffice to excite the proprietors to draw from their land the greatest profit in their power.

BUT the inequality of property having collected in the same hands, lands of considerable extent, whereof the annual produce infinitely exceeds the real wants of the proprietors, they would have neglected cultivation, they would have spared themselves the pains it requires, if they could not have exchanged the superfluous fruits whereof they were possessors for other goods.

THUS

* We must observe that in France they sow after the rate of four bushels (English) on an English acre, so 5 or 6 for one is 20 or 24 bushels per acre, which is the full medium crop in England. If this is not known, one is surprized at reading in Mr. Lullin de Chateaufieux's papers, and in other places of Duhamel, that the common return in their out fields, was only three for one. Indeed 12 bushels per acre is little enough. Tr.

THUS the inequality of property would have stopt the progress of agriculture, if arts, manufactures, and all the works of industry, had not come to excite the emulation of proprietors, by offering them the means of converting those fruits which were useless to them, into a variety of things agreeable to them.

THESE means, at first sight, seem encreased by the constant liberty of selling corn to foreigners, as that opens a still larger field to proprietors for the exchange of their superfluity; but we shall soon perceive that if there are countries where this liberty is necessary for the encouragement of tillage, there are others where this expedient is void of utility.

LET us place this distinction in a clear light.

A BEGINNING state, such, for instance, as the English colonies in North America, ought to set no bounds to the exportation of corn; vast tracts of

land to break up, leave unknown the quantity of subsistence which the country can produce; at the same time arts and manufactures are there as yet in their infancy; wine, oil, tea, sugar, coffee, and various other agreeable productions, will not grow, or are not yet cultivated there.

PROPRIETORS somewhat considerable would then be doomed to great privations, if they could not give their corn in exchange for the goods of foreign countries; as they would have no other means of payment, so long as their country did not furnish some peculiar production, or some objects of industry agreeable to other nations.

IN such a situation, the least obstacle to the liberty of exportation, would be a law of privation upon the proprietors, and a discouragement to agriculture.

THERE are countries in the north of Europe which participate of most of these circumstances, and which ought to govern

govern themselves upon the same principles as America.

THERE are other states, as Poland, which might begin to deviate from them; but all the lands there being divided among the great lords, who are likewise part of the sovereignty, the laws and customs must necessarily be affected by their interest. In the midst of that impetuous aristocracy, the administration has not strength enough to hazard new regulations; it is not without much difficulty, that under such a constitution, arts, manufactures, and commerce can, by extending themselves, render the exportation of corn less necessary.

FRANCE bears not the smallest resemblance to any of these countries; it is the country in Europe the most favoured by nature, and the most improved by time.

THOUGH the number of great properties encreases there daily, there are still many possessors of small demesnes,
who

who consume the fruits of them, and who want no incitement to cultivate but the desire of life. As to the great proprietors, France offers them in exchange for the corn whereof they dispose, whatever can excite their wish; twenty-four millions of men, its present number of inhabitants *, are to be fed by the corn of the kingdom; and

* From the returns made by the several intendants of the provinces, has been made out a state of the births, marriages, and deaths, in the whole kingdom, during the years 1770, 1771, and 1772. The medium of deaths is 780,040: this has been multiplied by 33 to find the number of inhabitants in France, as some authors on the subject have thought this to be the proportion; and this gives 25,741,430 inhabitants.

But as this proportion of 33 living persons to one death is not generally admitted, and that some calculators think it too high, I have formed my calculation at 31; which will appear the more moderate, when we consider that there are always many deaths which are not entered in the registers of deaths, and that in the collections that have been made, it is more easy to omit than to add.

However this may be, reckoning 31 living persons for every death, there appears to be 24,181,333 inhabitants in France.

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the industrious part of this multitude procure by their labours every exquisite commodity for the proprietary part: in one part, they cultivate for them wines, oils, and other productions peculiar to the soil of France; in another, they contribute by various labours to the carrying on her colonies, and the culture of the precious commodities which they yield; every where, an immense multitude addicting themselves to arts and manufactures, satisfy every caprice of luxury and vanity.

IN fine, those various riches, the fruits of industry and of a happy soil, equally envied by other nations, serve to pay for those foreign commodities which the inhabitants of France desire; and introduce besides into the kingdom annually forty or fifty millions of money, destined to satisfy the wish of avarice, and to content that imagination which prefers the power of expending to the pleasure of expence.

Is

Is there a country in the world which has less occasion to sell its corn to foreigners in order to encourage its agriculture? certainly not. In a country to which nature has not been bountiful, and whose inhabitants are destitute of ingenuity, they may indeed wish constantly for this commerce; and, accordingly, if we cast an eye on the different countries of Europe, we shall see that it is Poland, depressed by the feudal government, which sells her corn continually to the industrious Hollanders; that it is Africa, ignorant and barbarous, which sells hers to the inhabitants of Marseilles; that it is America, still in the cradle, which sells her corn to Europe, arrived to a degree of perfection; that it *was* France, in fine, crushed and laid waste by civil wars, which nourished foreigners with her grain; and that it *is* France, enlightened by the age of Louis the XIVth, and by the genius of Colbert, which now consumes them herself, which has no longer need
to

to sell them to acquire money or other foreign productions, but which is sure to obtain all those goods in exchange for the fruits of her industry; the true commerce of a nation in a state of perfection, and the only one which maintains its prosperity, by encreasing at once its population and its wealth.

CHAP. IX.

The constant Liberty to export Corn may be prejudicial to Agriculture.

WE have seen, that by the inequality of property, the encouragement of agriculture depends on the variety of means open to the great proprietors, to exchange their superfluous corn for other things agreeable to them; and in this point of view, it seems, at first, indifferent, whether this exchange is made in France or in foreign countries by means of exportation; for in whatever manner the proprietors sell or
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exchange their corn, provided they are satisfied, they will be encouraged to improve their lands, and that important condition for agriculture will be fulfilled.

To this way of reasoning I answer, that the exchange of corn against the national industry, is much more certain and more encouraging for the proprietors, than the exchange of the same commodity for the productions of other countries.

THE nearer to the proprietors of subsistence those arts and manufactures which please them are established, the greater quantity can they have of conveniences and of the objects of luxury, in exchange for their corn, inasmuch as they are not obliged to allot part of it to pay the freight; and thus, the advantages which they may reap from cultivation are augmented.

THIS exchange of subsistence within the state itself, is also much more certain; for the nourishment of men being fixed by nature, the need of corn is

necessarily limited; so that the French proprietors could not convert their superfluous corn into other articles, by means of exportation, but so far only as there should be a want in foreign countries, and of course this commerce would be uncertain; whereas the exchange of these fruits of the earth is always assured, when the same kingdom which produced them, abounds in workmen, manufacturers, and artists of every species.

THE result of these observations is, that the extensiveness and variety of national industry is the chief of all encouragements that can be given to agriculture. Thus it would not be of service to it, to permit constantly the free exportation of corn, if that liberty should be repugnant to the progress of arts and manufactures; and that it would be so, we shall prove in the following chapter, and also in the sequel of this work *.

I OUGHT

* It was not possible to give the propositions, which are the object of these first chapters, all the extent

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I OUGHT first, however, to answer a common objection.

THE progress and variety of arts and industry which we hold forth as favourable to agriculture, are precisely what are prejudicial to it. All these establishments, say they, turn men from the cultivation of the ground and from country labour, by presenting to them more attractive occupations.

I CANNOT conceive why men should always set in opposition those branches which rise from the same stem.

ARTISTS, and all the workmen in matters of conveniency or of luxury,

extent which they require; because we have in the first place considered them separately from the idea of price; an abstract idea, which would have rendered the study of those truths which we search after too difficult, even from its beginning. When we come to treat of those prices, and of the relation they bear to agriculture and manufactures, we shall enter more deeply into the questions, which at first we only consider in a general manner.

are

are fed by the superfluous subsistence, which the inequality of property accumulates in the same hands; but this superfluous subsistence could not exist but by means of cultivation, and after all the men employed in it have received their maintenance; thus in the actual state of society, the arts are not rivals of agriculture, but the encouragement and the recompence of it.

It is added, that if those establishments of industry did not offer in exchange so many things which are agreeable to those who in a community dispose of subsistence, or of money which represents it, a greater part of those riches would be employed in the nourishment of the cultivators, and the lands would become more fruitful. But why should the proprietors desire this fruitfulness unless for their own happiness? Can we form any other idea of the spirit of property? They will voluntarily impose some momentary privations on themselves, but it will always be with a
E design

design to increase their expences; the more labourers they have employed on their lands, the more corn they will reap, the greater superfluity of it they will have, and they will feed the greater number of men destined to their luxury and their pleasures.

THUS the progress of agriculture will always lead back to the increase of industry, the variety of which will serve for an encouragement to the labour of the ground.

ALTHOUGH some deviations, or some transient disproportions should ensue between the recompenses which the cultivators deserve, and those which are given to the workmen in articles of pleasure, these are only natural agitations in so vast a field of combinations; but the force of necessity will soon set every thing again in its due place. The rich, who are the great lawgivers in point of wages, and who cannot maintain the artificers of luxury but after they have multiplied subsistence by the means of labourers,

labourers, will never fail to establish between these different tasks the proportions necessary for the benefit of property.

LET men declaim then no more against arts and manufactures, or let those who proscribe them find out a method to make an equal distribution of lands, and moreover to repeat this distribution every year; without this expedient, impossible to be put in execution, a variety of establishments of industry will be the only means of exciting the possessors of vast domains to carry on agriculture towards perfection, and to admit the multitude to a share of the fruits of the earth.

C H A P. X.

Establishments of Industry are the only Means of raising the Consumption to the Level of the greatest Cultivation.

NEXT to the encouragement of agriculture, which produces subsistence, what is doubtless the most important to population is, that this subsistence may be consumed in the country which has produced it; but to attain this, without prejudice to agriculture, it is not sufficient to prohibit the exportation of it; for we have shewn, that in states destitute of industry, or wanting growths peculiar to their soil, this prohibition would only serve to stop the progress of agriculture.

THE sovereign power can, indeed, hinder the proprietors from sending their corn abroad, but it cannot oblige them to cultivate their lands with ardour, if they have not hopes of exchanging their growths which are
useless

useless to them for some agreeable objects. Thus, to raise population to the level of the greatest possible cultivation, it is absolutely necessary that the country be filled with trades, arts, manufactures, and all the establishments of industry that may be agreeable to the proprietors of corn.

C H A P. XI.

*The constant Liberty of exporting Corn
hurts Manufactures.*

MANKIND is so governed by habit, that an industrious nation may for a long time labour under a mistake touching its abilities, and carry on a continual traffick of its corn against foreign manufactures; whilst with some efforts, or some momentary privations, it might come to establish the same manufactures within itself, and would thus satisfy the taste of its proprietors without hurting its population. It belongs to

the sovereign, to the intelligent minister who seconds him, to re-animate the national spirit, and to overcome the fatal effects of laziness and habit. This was the merit of Colbert, and the aim which he proposed to himself in the establishment of sundry prohibitory laws, whether against the carrying out corn, or against the bringing in foreign manufactures. These precautions, calumniated now-a-days, are not (we shall see it) savage, unjust, or barbarous institutions; they are patriot laws, laws of union, which, in such a country as France, tend to the general good, by augmenting population, without being contrary to the riches, or to the happiness of the proprietors.

COLBERT, animated with this spirit, saw the greatest success crown his views, and France is now filled with establishments of all kinds. Arts and manufactures, taste and abilities, whatever a happy nature, raised towards perfection by time, is capable of producing, surround

round the proprietors of corn, and offer them agreeable exchanges; but these establishments, when once formed, have still need of being maintained and seconded by sage laws, whereof the most important are those concerning corn; too great an exportation would be sufficient to spread a general disquiet, to destroy men by sufferings and mortalities, to thwart manufactures and all the labours of industry, by the changes which this very exportation might occasion in the price of labour; and, under this aspect, the constant liberty of exporting corn would be a law fatal to the repose, and to the prosperity of France.

C H A P. XII.

Can the Liberty of exporting Corn possibly be abused?

WH Y should this liberty be fatal? Why should it produce immoderate exportations, and contrary to the public good? The power to do a thing does not necessarily infer the execution of it; in a word, it is added, before you accuse liberty, let us examine whether it can possibly be abused.

THESE doubts are reasonable, but it is easy to clear them up.

EVERY one would certainly consider an exportation as contrary to the public good, which should deprive the inhabitants of France of part of the corn necessary for their subsistence; or which should carry out of the kingdom that quantity of the surplus which prevents the proprietors of corn from prescribing arbitrarily to those who stand in need of that corn to support life; that precious surplus

surplus which establishes between the contracting parties, that kind of equality so necessary in the traffick of an article essential to life.

LET us now see if liberty could bring on exportations of this kind.

FIRST then, What is this liberty in affairs of commerce?

IT is the absolute permission given to every member of the community to do with his money, his merchandise, and his industry, whatsoever he thinks fit, without disobeying the laws.

THUS, in the system of absolute liberty, we could not be safe from an exportation hurtful to the general good, but in so far as it would be contrary to the interest of the buyer and of the seller of corn.

LET us now consider, whether the particular conveniencies of either one or the other of these dealers have any connection with the public interest, and may be relied on as its safeguards.

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THE sellers of corn are the proprietors, the farmers, and lastly the merchants, who for a time put themselves in their place; all these sellers make no distinction of persons, surely, when they would sell their corn; the price alone determines them; thus, the farmer will open his barns to the French factor who buys for foreign countries, as readily as to the merchant who intends to dispose of them in the heart of the kingdom; the public weal forms no article in the calculations of private interest, and it belongs to the laws alone to dictate to it the sacrifices it should make.

LET us now examine if the interest of foreign buyers would better prevent the abuse of liberty.

IT may be said, they will not buy in France when corn is dear there, and it will become dear as soon as the number of buyers encrease; so the interest of foreigners itself will set proper bounds to the liberty of exportation. Is not this one assertion already sufficient to
give

give the alarm? for if the inconveniences of this liberty were only prevented by what it is expedient for other nations to do; whenever their policy should lead them to do what their pecuniary interest might not advise, the tranquillity of France would be in their hands.

BUT this is not all, It is easy to see that the mere mercantile interest of foreign buyers might bring on dangerous exportations; for the price is out of the question when there is a famine; men must live at any price, and every one takes his part of what is offered for sale. If, indeed, foreign countries were separated from France by deserts of fifty leagues over, it might cost ten or twelve livres a septier, carriage, and then it might be difficult for them ever to encroach on what is necessary for France. But all her frontier provinces, and those which lie on the ocean and on the Mediterranean, are nearer to foreign countries than to her own inland provinces; even

even those which are near the maritime provinces, and have a navigable river, may send their corn cheaper to a foreign port than to the heart of the kingdom.

It cannot then be doubted, but that the interest of the buyers may often induce them to exportations contrary to the welfare of France.

It may be said, perhaps, that if other nations buy up our corn, we shall do the same by theirs, and that by this reciprocity, this liberty will not be hurtful. But the establishment of the most perfect liberty of exportation in France will not determine other powers to permit it, or at least they will continue to change or to modify their laws on that head, as need requires. Thus, whilst they would leave to France only a right to their superfluity, she would give them the means of obtaining part of her necessary.

But if it was possible that all the sovereigns of Europe should agree, by
common

common consent, to permit the free exportation of corn; it would still be a rash treaty of commerce, on which there could be no reliance; for in times of scarcity, free government could never carry it into execution; and the most despotick sovereigns frequently could not enforce it, but by making war on their own people.

IN a word, this reciprocity doth not exist; almost all the countries in Europe prohibit exportation, or modify it.

CORN cannot be carried out of Italy but under permissions which are suspended or renewed after every harvest; in Switzerland, in Savoy there has been an absolute prohibition for several years past; the greatest part of the German states bordering on France follow the same example; in the Austrian Netherlands, exportation is only allowed at intervals; in England, it is prohibited at a certain price; in the Levant, it is allowed or forbidden according to circumstances;

cumstances; in Barbary, the quantities are limited; in Spain and Portugal, they have continual wants; even in Sicily, which is entirely a corn country, it is not allowed to be carried out, till they are assured that a sufficient provision of it remains in the country.

IN the midst of all these prohibitory laws, if France, which is the most populous country in Europe, should suffer herself to be led away by the principles of absolute liberty, all other nations would be astonished at it, and it would not be long ere she felt troubles and misfortunes which would force her to change her system.

C H A P. XIII.

Importance of the Inconveniencies attending the free Exportation of Corn.

SOME may agree that the free exportation of corn is liable to abuse, and yet insist that this abuse is of so little importance, that it is not worth while to check liberty in order to prevent it.

THEY even cite facts in support of this proposition, and say that during the three years following the law of liberty issued in 1764, there went out of France only twelve or fifteen hundred thousand septiers more than came into it, scarce the hundredth part of the annual consumption; what great danger can there be in such an exportation? It is at most but the subsistence of 250,000 people; it would be better to have so many inhabitants the less, than to cramp liberty*.

CONSIDERING

* In France every person, one with another, requires two septiers of corn.

Reckoning

CONSIDERING the difference in crops,
the quantity of subsistence cannot be
always

Reckoning 24 millions of souls in France, the annual consumption is about 48 millions of septiers.

In several books on oeconomical subjects the general subsistence of the kingdom is calculated at the rate of three septiers a head; but this is certainly an error.

It is generally agreed, according to various observations, that there must be from a pound and a quarter to a pound and a half a head *per diem*.

Let us reckon a pound and an half, which is the ration for a soldier; labouring men sometimes eat more of it, but many people consume much less of it; young children and sick persons, little or none.

Let us now see how much corn a year will make a pound and an half of bread *per diem*.

A pound and an half of bread multiplied by 365, makes 547 pounds of bread *per ann.*

Now two septiers of corn, if the bran is not taken out, which is the method of making ammunition bread, produces, according to the experience of contractors for provisions, six hundred and forty-eight pounds of bread †.

Two

† How this should be, doth not appear. The septier is equal to 4 bushels one peck, and one third of a peck, English standard measure, which at 57 lb. per bushel, which Smith says is the average weight, amounts only to 247 lb. but taking it at the weight fixt by the edict 1764, viz. 240 lb.

French,

always equal to the quantity consumed ; this inequality then must be balanced by exportation or importation.

A COUNTRY which should export annually 500,000 septiers of corn, would,

Two septiers of corn, with one fourth taken out for bran *, make commonly four hundred and sixty pounds of bread, and may make more, as appears by the above instance.

Let us take the medium of these two kinds, to comprehend the different conditions of the inhabitants of France ; then two septiers will produce 554 pounds of bread, so more than a pound and an half *per diem*.

French, equal to 262 lb. 12 oz. 8 dwt. English, the two septiers weighing 480 lb. and adding thereto one-fourth for the increase by the water, &c. which is what is required (nearly) by our standard of bread, and which is higher than it is generally stated, would make only 600 lb. instead of 648 lb. or $\frac{2}{3}$ less. So in the following instance, where $\frac{1}{4}$ is deducted for bran, the two septiers should make but 450 lb. instead of 460 lb. as there stated, or $\frac{1}{20}$ less. Whence does this proceed ? does the meal or flour take more water than is supposed ; or does it rather proceed from inaccuracy ? We may be the more inclined to think the latter if we observe, that the coarse flour is supposed to gain $\frac{2}{37}$, and the fine only $\frac{1}{48}$, whereas fine flour will take more water than coarse. Tr.

* This must be for fine bread, for one-fourth in bran is not taken out for common bread, notwithstanding what is said in Mr. Pownal's act of parliament. Tr.

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cæteris paribus, have 500,000 inhabitants less than one which should annually import the same quantity; this is not a trifling advantage; but the question is far from being confined to a calculation of this kind.

THE more the smallness of the exportation consequent upon the edict of 1764 is insisted upon, the more it manifests the greater inconveniences attending that liberty, as it shews that the carrying out a very small quantity of corn is sufficient to occasion a prodigious alteration in the price *.

EXPERIENCE proves on this head, what reflection points out; and I proceed to shew for what reasons, in the commerce of corn, so small a cause produces so great an effect.

IT is of the utmost importance to prove that we can never frame a precise idea of the extent of the mischief which will result from even a moderate exportation, if the greatest precautions are not used to direct it. IF

* The price rose almost cent. per cent. in several provinces, immediately upon these exportations.

IF all the inhabitants of a kingdom bought, immediately after harvest, the two septiers of corn requisite for their year's subsistence, the quantity required would be known with certainty; provision would be made for it by purchases in foreign countries; and if their prohibitory laws prevented it, every inhabitant who had not been able to obtain his two septiers, would expatriate himself to seek his food elsewhere.

LET us state this deficiency at 400,000 septiers, to have an object of comparison; here are two hundred thousand inhabitants, who, on this supposition, are obliged to quit their country; it would be an evil, no doubt, but still the extent of it would be known.

LET us now suppose that those same inhabitants, instead of laying in their whole subsistence at the beginning of the year, buy their bread every week or every day; the deficiency would not only be known much later, but the danger of this deficiency would increase in a terrible manner.

IN effect, in a nation where they have shared the total mass of subsistence at the beginning of the year, the deficiency of 400,000 septiers of corn can only represent the food of 200,000 men; but in a country where this partition should be made every month, the deficiency of 400,000 septiers would not appear till the beginning of the last month, and then these 400,000 septiers would be the food necessary for 2,400,000 men, till the end of the year.

IF they laid in their provision only once a week, at the beginning of the last week this same deficiency of 400,000 septiers would deprive 10,400,000 souls of their subsistence.

AND to shew how far this hypothesis will extend, a nation consisting of 24,000,000 of men, might die of hunger by a deficiency of 400,000 septiers, if they laid in their provision only once in three days; for the last three days of the year, there would be no corn;

corn ; as 400,000 septiers is the food of 24,000,000 of men during that period.

THIS is enough to shew that it is not sufficient that the exportation be moderate to render it indifferent, or safe from the danger of great inconveniences ; and it is obvious that the more numerous a nation is, or the more it is composed of a great number of labouring people, who, through indigence or habit, lay in at a time but a small provision of bread or of corn, the more the dangers of exportation do augment ; not only because the deficiency is perceived more late, but also because in proportion as the year runs on, the same quantity of corn represents the nourishment of a greater number of persons.

I KNOW well that a real deficiency almost never exists, though it has been sometimes seen that the ears of corn have been plucked before they were ripe ; but it must be observed that the surplus which remains commonly in a country

at the eve of a new crop, is a surplus absolutely necessary, and which cannot be sensibly broke in upon, without experiencing the greatest calamities.

IF there was in a country, only the quantity of corn equal to the needs, a great part of its inhabitants would be in danger of perishing; because this general equilibrium between all the subsistence and all the needs of a kingdom, could never exist in all places and at all times; and when even the circulation of this article should be as rapid as perfectly well directed, yet if one man had more than his share, another must be left in want.

IN fine, and this is the most important consideration, there is no equality between the desire of realizing, by turning corn into money, and the necessity of exchanging money for corn.

THUS if there did not exist in the hands of the proprietors of corn, a surplus sufficiently great, that part of the people which lives by labour
would

would be in a continual state of oppression and distress ; that happy surplus excites the proprietors to sell, lest others should get the start of them, tempers their power, and weakens their natural empire over the buyers ; this, in fine, is the foundation of the equality which reigns between contracting parties so unequal in their needs, and who present themselves at the market, the one that they may be able to live to-day, the others, often, that they may support their luxury or their conveniencies hereafter.

THE infinite importance of this surplus is an idea on which we cannot dwell too much ; it is by this we discover the principal inconveniencies of the unlimited liberty of the commerce of corn, and the necessity of setting bounds to it.

LET me be permitted to lay open, still more, this proposition, by a sensible instance.

LET us suppose 100,000 men in an inclosed place ; 100,000 loaves are necessary

cessary for their daily subsistence, and some merchants come and bring them every day.

As long as this quantity is furnished exactly, the price agreed on does not alter ; but if they perceive once or twice, that only two loaves are wanting, a deficiency which deprives two persons of their subsistence ; the fear of being one of those unhappy wretches excites such an ardour of purchasing, that the merchants come to double or treble the ordinary price.

STILL further ; if the 100,000 men have no easy means of counting these 100,000 loaves when they are brought, distracted by their anxiety, they will judge ill of them ; frequently their imaginations will represent them as only 99,000, when there are really 100,000. The sellers again, on their side, will endeavour to keep up this fear, by the artful manner in which they will heap up these loaves, to lessen the appearance of them, and they will succeed

thus in selling them much dearer; and the price will not come back to the reasonable rate, till the merchants shall have seen several times that a great many loaves remain on their hands, and till their eagerness to sell shall have restored to the buyers the tranquillity which they had lost.

THIS is a succinct idea of the commerce of corn. What I have just now made sensible by stating precise circumstances, comes to pass only in a confused manner in a great society; but it may be equally perceived by this example, how the exportation of a very small quantity of corn, (equal, if you please, only to the hundredth part of the total consumption) shall often be sufficient to double the price of corn, without there being a real deficiency; we find the motive of it in the infinite importance of this surplus of which we have been speaking, and in the ideas, necessarily vague and uncertain, which the inhabitants of a vast and populous country

country must form to themselves concerning it.

THESE different observations let us know why the price of corn is exposed to variations, of which that of other commodities are not susceptible.

WHENEVER the risk of wanting any kind of merchandize for a time strikes no terror, the merchants would gain but little by the artifices which they might employ to buy up this commodity, or to render it scarce for a short time. Thus it is observed that the monopoly of commodities which are but of small necessity, must be compleat, that is, they must be almost all bought up, in order to give the law; but as to necessary commodities, such as corn, a partial monopoly will make an impression, because the anxiety of the consumers fortifies the power of the merchants; the smallest fear of wanting what is necessary, acts more on the spirits than the greatest probability of being deprived of a thing merely agreeable.

IT

It is for want of considering this question under this point of view, that men fall into great errors; it is asserted in some works on this subject, that to raise the price a fifth or a tenth part, the fifth or tenth part of the whole quantity of corn must be bought up*.

WERE we to ascribe so small an effect to so great a cause, we should have reason to fear neither exportation, nor ingrossing, which sometimes has the same appearance; but the mistake is obvious. It is not in this proportion, the price of corn rises; the taking away of a fifth or a tenth of the quantity, or of much less indeed, might, under certain circumstances, carry the price to an unheard of excess; and to conceive a true notion of it, it is not with the quantity

* The author of *Observations on the commerce of corn*, expresses himself thus: "Now in times of liberty, all second causes of terrors and alarms being suppressed, to augment the price of corn a tenth, you must take away a tenth of the quantity of the commodity; to augment it a fifth, you must get into your hands a fifth of the quantity."

quantity of corn in being, that we must compare the quantity taken away, but with the amount of the surplus requisite to temper the power of the sellers and the alarms of the consumers.

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I MUST now answer a more general objection.

THE free exportation of corn may expose us to rises in the price, whence might result sufferings and mortalities; but the same rises of price would inspire a fresh zeal for cultivation; from thence greater advantages will arise, and the temporary losses that population may have sustained, will in time be amply recruited.

WHAT an argument to propound to MEN!

FIRST, is there any parity, either in morality or in humanity, between a thousand of our fellow creatures who actually perish, and a hundred thousand who may be born in time to come?

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It is man that *has* tasted happiness, and who *now* suffers; it is man who is in possession of life, and who is obliged to renounce it; it is *he* who is my fellow-creature; it is with *him* that I have made alliance; it is for *him* that the laws are made; the laws do not oblige men to multiply on the earth, but they inflict death on him that gives death. I do not at all understand that cold compassion of the head, for future generations, which shuts our hearts against the cries of ten thousand wretches who surround us.

ONE word more on this singular calculation. Were we even not permitted to discuss it, but with the precision of mathematical sciences, were living men, and children unborn, to be looked on only as X's in algebra, the proposition advanced would still be false; for it is not the thousand men only, who perish through the dearth of corn, whom you must compare with a future augmentation of population; you must
add

add to the loss of these thousand men, the misery of ten millions of others, who only escape death by sufferings; the sorrows of as many more, subjected as spectators to all the anguish of compassion, or who live in anxiety in the midst of a community distracted by the want of food, or by the dearness of the price of it.

THERE is, then, no proportion between the actual evil of a considerable rise of price, and the future good which may from thence result to agriculture; but even this encouragement is an illusion, or at least a dangerous and ill-chosen resource. It is now time to go to the bottom of this proposition, and to examine the influence of a free exportation of corn on the prices, and the effect of the prices on agriculture and manufactures.

C H A P. XIV.

On Prices.

PRICES are only the effect of the relations which exist between the convenience of the sellers and that of the buyers, between the quantities to be sold, and the amount of needs ; and these relations themselves are connected with preceding causes ; so that prices, in the study of oeconomical truths, are like the degrees of a thermometer in the observations of a naturalist ; they announce the temperature of the air, but they do not influence it.

IT is in vain however that we would fix our attention solely on the great circumstances which govern the prices. In abstract questions we can never distinctly perceive the chain which unites first causes with their effects.

THE man of the people, the soveraign, fills up by his meditation that interval which lies between the sources of the
prosperity

prosperity of a state, and the different private interests. But the private man, as lost in that vast space, or guided by a torch which lights only himself, reduces every thing to his own domestic calculations. It is thus that in the circumstances relating to corn, he observes nothing but their impression on the prices; that is one simple fact which he seizes immediately, and by which he easily measures what is for his advantage.

IN general, the prices are the first object of mens reflections, and the most immediate motive of their determinations: this is a truth in moral philosophy, as well as in political oeconomy.

IN that continual commerce of money, of abilities, of opinions, and of praises established in the world, every one wishes that what he has to dispose of may be esteemed, in order that he may obtain in exchange so much the more of what he wants; and it is thus that the word, *price*, expressing the value

value which others set on what belongs to us, is become the most general term of language, that which represents our most constant interest, and our most habitual idea.

HOWEVER that may be, men accustomed to regulate all their speculations according to this word, by *this*, square also their judgments on the good of the publick; and, in this manner, the proprietor thinks it is for the prosperity of the state that he should sell the produce of his land at a high rate; whilst the man who lives by his industry, attributes all the ills he suffers to the dearneſs of corn.

WE must necessarily, then, follow men in their habitual manner of reasoning, and ſee whether the ideas which they form concerning prices, and the conſequences which they draw from thence, are contrary to the opinions which we have laid down. We ſhall ſoon perceive that the general intereſt of the community, at whatever height

it is stated, remains always the same, under whatever more or less subordinate aspect it is afterwards considered.

C H A P. XV.

What Effect the constant Liberty of exporting Corn would produce on the Price.

THE constant liberty of exporting corn, encreases in a country the means of selling it, as it admits to the market, foreign as well as national buyers.

THIS liberty does not at the same time encrease the means of buying it abroad, as it does not subject foreigners to any reciprocity.

IT is then manifest, that the constant permission to export corn must keep the prices higher than the prohibition.

THE same constant liberty must also occasion considerable starts in the prices, because there is no safeguard against an inconfi-

inconsiderate exportation, and because such an exportation, though moderate in quantity, may sometimes occasion an excessive rise, as we have already laid open. In fine, the prices, which are only the result of some cause, whatever it is, can never again be restored to a certain equality, but so far as the circumstances which influence them are themselves rendered more equal. Thus, should France permit foreign nations to carry off her corn when they need it, if these nations grant her the same permission, and this their engagement can be relied on, (two vain suppositions!) the equality of prices will be favoured, since a larger field would be opened for mutual succour. But should France open her granaries to foreigners, whilst they shut theirs against her, the inequality is manifest. In fine, should she open them to all nations indiscriminately, whilst only part of them return her the same favour, this, though less palpable, is still an inequality; for if the Flemings, the

English, the Savoyards, the Swiss, &c. have the permission to export corn from France, eight days time is enough for them to make use of it; but if these nations refuse all reciprocity, France can have recourse in her need only to America, to Barbary, or to the north of Europe, countries which, some by their distance, others by the obstacles which the seasons put to their navigation, can yield no succour but in the space of two, three, or four months; and from this disparity will result unequal effects, and consequently starts in the prices, more frequent or more easily produced.

THUS in the midst of the prohibitory system, which the several nations of Europe observe in a more or less rigid degree, a law which should permit constantly in France the free exportation of corn, would only be a means of adding to the internal accidents which influence the prices, all those to which foreign nations might be subject; it would be exposing France to be affected by their needs,

needs, by their disquietude, by their politicks, without assuring to her any reciprocal succours in times of scarcity or of alarm.

CHAP. XVI.

The constant high Price of Corn is not necessary for the Encouragement of Agriculture. The Relation the Price of that Commodity bears to Labour.

THE introduction of money into society has rendered all exchanges much more commodious, by having one common standard for them all; but this usage has rendered it more difficult to maintain a wise harmony between the respective rights of the three great classes of society, the proprietors, the industrious, and the sovereign.

IN effect, in proportion as societies have become more extensive, as population has encreased, as riches have accumulated, as borrowing has sprung up,

and as the sum of current specie has varied, all the primitive relations between things are become more confused, and each of these three classes of society has been able to make a bad use of its strength, and of circumstances, in a much more concealed manner, and consequently with much more boldness or indifferency.

THE sovereign, who would not have dared to ask more than one or two tenths from his people, if they had been to be paid in kind, has easily disguised the injustice of his pretensions, when he could express them by a sum in money, the relation of which to the abilities of the subjects was no longer apparent.

THE proprietors, in their turn, who would have blushed to have availed themselves of the continual labour of one of their fellow creatures, without procuring him a comfortable subsistence, have been able to abandon themselves without remorse to their tyrannical greediness, when this labour valued

lued in money, has dispensed them from examining, whether with this money, the man of toil could at all times provide for all his needs. In the midst of this confusion, and of the constant revolutions in the prices of labour, and of the fruits of the earth, and in the amount of imposts, the man of observation is sometimes at a loss how to distinguish the true interest of the publick; and the wish of one whole class of society frequently serves only to lead him astray.

LET us endeavour to guard against these numerous illusions, and to reduce to plain notions the relation which there is between the prices of corn and the encouragement of agriculture. To effect this, let us begin by supposing the use of money unknown in a community; the proprietor of a revenue equivalent to the annual subsistence of fifty men, might express his fortune in an abstract, yet intelligible manner, by saying, after deducting his own nutriture,

I have forty-nine *substances* of which I can dispose.

To make this superfluity contribute to his own happiness, this proprietor would destine these substances to support men without property, and he would obtain in exchange the fruit of their industry.

THEN any piece of work, which would require a year's work, would necessarily be worth a *whole substance*; and a work done in six months would be worth only *an half substance*.

AN ingenious artist, availing himself of his superior skill, and of the competition of proprietors to enjoy it, would demand for the price of his labour, not only a substance for himself, but also those of ten men devoted to *his* service; then the work of that artist would necessarily be worth eleven substances.

THIS is enough to shew, how the price of the labour of the common man who has only strength, and the price of the skill of the ingenious man, are both equally

equally composed of the price of subsistances*.

LET us now introduce into this society some kind of money, to serve as a general measure in all exchanges; the relations which we have just now established will not change, if the same piece of money represents the value of the labour of a man, and what we have called his subsistence; now this is what could not fail of happening; for the relation which the labour bears to the recompence of it, does not depend on the name given to that recompence, but on the respective degrees of the needs and of the power which exist between the proprietors who require the services of others, and the men without property who serve them.

* Under the word *subsistence*, I include, besides the food of the labouring man, the portion which he must have given up to those who made him a coat, or built him a hut, if he had not the skill or the liberty to do it himself; so that all the needs of absolute necessity are thus comprehended under the word *subsistence*.

WHAT

WHAT then will a proprietor gain by selling the substances in disposal, for a greater or a less sum of money, if the labour which he wants to buy in exchange becomes dearer in proportion? What additional encouragement will he have to cultivation?

I SHALL be answered no doubt; Your theory won't succeed; it is too contrary to the most common and most general ideas; it is even contradicted by experience. How will you persuade us, will the possessors of land say, that we have no greater interest in cultivating when the septier is worth thirty livres, than when it is worth but twenty? If you will not believe us, see the effect of the edict of 1764, which, by raising the price, by the liberty of exportation, has occasioned many waste lands to be broken up.

A THEORY that should be in constant opposition to facts would certainly deserve no credit; but those facts which serve as a foundation to the objection I
have

have stated, do not at all destroy the propositions which I have established.

IN a given time, the constant price of corn, whatever it is, must be indifferent to the proprietors of land, but the rise of price of that commodity is an advantage, more or less lasting, to them; and this is enough to make that circumstance the object of their wishes, and to engage them to break up land, as happened by the effects of the edict 1764.

WE must therefore distinguish between the *constant* high price, and the *rise* of price: the *constant* high price of corn does not at all better the condition of the proprietors of land, because the price of labour is in proportion to it; but the *rise* of price, the passage from the low price to the high price, the beginning of dearness, procures a real advantage to these proprietors; for whilst they augment the price of their commodities, they prevent the rise of the price of labour; at least they oppose the pretensions of the labourers, and so long
as

as a disproportion subsists, the proprietors gain by the sufferings of the man of toil, and thus they perceive a fresh advantage in cultivating, which may induce them to break up land. But this advantage disappears in proportion as the industrious man succeeds in raising the price of his time, and as the old relations are re-established.

WHAT does that signify? it may be said; in the mean time, and till this kind of level, which will destroy the temporary advantage of the proprietors, takes place, they will have broke up some lands, and the whole community will become more rich and more powerful.

I ACKNOWLEDGE it; but of all the encouragements of which agriculture is susceptible, that which results from the rise of the price of the necessaries of life, appears unquestionably the least expedient; for it is an encouragement which cannot exist but at the expence of the happiness of the multitude, and
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of the publick tranquillity; and when reduced to first principles, it is just such an encouragement as a heavy poll tax would be, imposed for a time on all men of labour for the profit of all men of property; even this last manner would be less grievous, because the bounds of it would be known, and the very apparence of such an abuse must put an end to it; but when the proprietors raise the price of corn, and will not raise the price of the work of the industrious, there is formed between these two classes of society a kind of combat, concealed indeed, but dreadful, where the number of the unhappy cannot be reckoned up, where the strong oppresses the weak, under the shelter of the law, where property oppresses, with the weight of its prerogatives, the man who lives by the labour of his hands.

WHEN bread was at a moderate price, the artisan maintained his family, and laid up something to support him in case of sickness; if the price rises consider-

ably, he cannot make this saving; possibly he must diminish the usual food of his children; he must make himself insensible to their tears, or he must deprive himself of the subsistence necessary to support his strength. In fine, as the bread grows dearer, the empire of the proprietor grows stronger and stronger; for as soon as the artisan or the labourer have nothing beforehand, they can dispute no longer, they must work to-day, under penalty of dying to-morrow; and in this combat of interest between the proprietor and the labourer, the one stakes his own life and the lives of his family, the other a mere delay of the encrease of his luxury. Even frequently industry is not stopt, and the distress is only domestic; for the proprietor who enjoys only that labour which is appropriated to his use, contents himself with computing how much is necessary for the subsistence of the man whom he employs, and does not look behind that poor wretch, at the wife and children he must

must feed. Thus one degree of want and misery produces a still greater.

I do not reckon, however, in the number of dangerous rises of price, that which proceeds from the yearly augmentation of money in Europe, for such a rise being insensible, the price of labour rises in proportion, without any effort; and, for the same reason, this kind of rise does not augment the advantages belonging to cultivation.

THEY are the rapid and sensible rises which offer an advantage, more or less durable, to the proprietors; but let us wish the rural labours other encouragements. When, in such a country as France, lands remain still uncultivated, can an enlightened administration want means to excite the cultivation of them, without convulsions, and without prejudice to any person whatsoever? No, surely; the loan of money to the possessors of these lands, a temporary exemption from imposts, a manufacture established in the neighbourhood, a canal

nal dug, a river rendered navigable, a general lowering of the interest of money, the consequence of a sage administration, these are the infallible means of exciting cultivation.

For how is it possible that they should not cultivate all land that yields five or six for one, if by means of the low rate of interest, or of the assistance of the representative of the society, they can find the first advance? If by some manufacture brought into the neighbourhood, they are certain of a proper exchange for the surplus of the produce, or if the easiness of communication permits that exchange to be made at a greater distance; and how many other encouragements may there not be found, which, peculiar to the lands to be cultivated, would not shake the publick order, like a general rise of the price of subsistence, and would produce at the same time a more certain and a more permanent effect?

FOR

For let us suppose that corn rises all on a sudden from twenty to thirty livres, without any rise of wages, and that a proprietor, *on this account alone*, may find it advantageous to undertake a new cultivation; he must necessarily give it up, when the price of labour shall have followed in its progress the rise of commodities, as his temporary advantage would be destroyed.

LET agriculture then be encouraged by means that are natural, durable, and tranquil; nothing is more worthy of praise, and happily nothing is more easy in such a country as France: but to aim at this by sudden rises of price; but in order to occasion the cultivation of twenty thousand acres, to disturb the harmony established between the price of the productions of a kingdom of twenty-five thousand square leagues, and the price of the labour of the industrious part of twenty-four millions of inhabitants; to animate thus the rich man by the sufferings of the poor

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man, and to raise a premium for the encouragement of agriculture, out of what is necessary for the support of the people; this is without exception, of all the means to excite agriculture, the least reasonable, the most dangerous, and the most contrary to the principles of sound administration.

C H A P. XVII.

The Relation which the Price of Corn bears to Imposts.

I HAVE shewn that the constant high price of corn was not a profit to the proprietors, because the price of the labour which they purchase conformed itself to it. But if the imposts are not in proportion to this rise of price, will not the proprietor of land make a sensible gain on that part of his income destined to that contribution? For if he was obliged to allot a hundred septiers of corn for the payment of taxes, he

he will be able to discharge them with fixty, if the price of corn is raised in that proportion. Here then is a certain advantage to the proprietors.

To judge rightly of this objection, let us see what is the effect of the sudden rise of the necessaries of life, on the treasure of the sovereign.

THIS treasure receives, only to disburse; and one part of its expences are fixed, the others are variable.

THE fixed expences, are salaries, pensions, wages, annuities, and all payments which are not susceptible of alteration.

THE variable expences are all things which must be bought, and the free labours of different kinds, whose prices are determined by circumstances.

LET us lay open the effect of the rise of the price of the necessaries of life, on these two heads of expences.

*Influence of the Rise of Corn on the
fixed Expences of the Sovereign.*

LET us suppose that the rise of corn is followed by that of labour, but that the impost is not augmented.

WHAT happens then? The proprietor of land, and likewise the labouring man make by this rise a gain on that part of their income destined to pay taxes.

FOR if the impost on the proprietor is eighteen hundred livres, and the septier of corn rises from eighteen to thirty livres, he will pay that impost with sixty septiers instead of a hundred.

So, if the tax on the workman is eighteen livres, and his day's wages rise from thirty-six to sixty sou's, he will discharge this tax with six days work instead of ten.

THE public treasure will not suffer by it in the fixed expences, such as we have enumerated, because they are determined in a settled manner, and independent on circumstances.

WHO

WHO will lose then by this rise?

IT is the annuitants and the pensioners of the public treasure; it is the officers, the magistrates, the soldiers, the sailors, and all persons who serve the king for a determined price; for this rise will prevent their having for that recompence, the same quantity of goods which they obtained formerly.

BUT as a part of these retributions had at their establishment an equitable relation to the value of things, when this relation is destroyed by a sensible rise in the prices, there comes a time when the sovereign discovers that it is just to augment in the same proportion, the salaries, the wages, the pensions, the pays, &c. and he resolves to do it.

THIS augmentation relieves all those paid by the treasure of the prince, from the sufferings, great or small, which they underwent by the rise of the price of labour, and of the productions of the earth; but from hence results an encrease of expences for the sove-

reign, and a deficiency in the public treasure.

Soon the imposts must be augmented; and there's an end of the advantage which the proprietor and the working man had made, whilst the sum of the impost was not raised, in proportion to the rise of corn and of labour.

LET us here recapitulate the progression of this rise, and its effect on the fixed expences of the sovereign, and on the impost.

I. RISE of the price of corn and of labour.

II. TEMPORARY advantage to the proprietor of corn, and to the industrious class, on the portion of their incomes destined to pay the imposts.

III. SUFFERINGS of the annuitants, the pensioners, the soldiers, the sailors, and all those who are engaged to serve the state for a determinate retribution.

IV. NECESSITY, sooner or later, for the sovereign to augment the retributions.

V,

V. DEFICIENCY in the treasure, by this augmentation of expences.

VI. NECESSITY to encrease the impost, to make good this deficiency.

VII. AND, by means of this new impost, the annihilation of the temporary advantage which the rise of corn and of labour had procured to the proprietor and to the working man.

Influence of Rises on the variable Expences of the Sovereign.

UPON the principles which we have last established, it is easy to calculate the effect of rises on this second kind of expences.

WE have said that they consisted in whatever must be purchased, or in the free labours whose price is not determined, and which consequently varies according to circumstances; therefore the sum of these expences is necessarily augmented by a general rise of price, and this augmentation occasions a deficiency in the public treasure with ra-

pidity, which obliges the sum of imposts to be raised in the same proportion.

THE annuitants alone, have no indemnification against the rise of corn and of labour; but as their revenues are founded on the principles of justice, the prejudice which they suffer, to the profit of the other members of the state, is a breach in the public order; and in a country where these rises should happen frequently, the interest of money would necessarily be affected by this chance of loss to the lenders.

IN general, it is apparent, that no advantage made in the interior of a community, by one of the three great classes which compose it, the sovereign, the proprietors, and the working men, can take place but at the expence of the other two; then the harmony which existed is disturbed, which is doubtless an evil, if that harmony was what it ought to be.

IT sometimes happens that the sovereign excites the rise of the price of corn,

corn, to render a new impost on land more supportable; and at another time he tries to fall the price of the same corn, to render a new tax on industry less sensible.

THE simpleness of these means seduces those who govern, and yet it is one of the most terrible faults that can be committed in administration: imposts should, as much as possible, be settled on a fixed foundation, and in proportions analogous to the abilities of the different orders in the community; but to think of alleviating the weight of a tribute by the rise of corn; but not to perceive any relation between such rise, and the ability of the public treasure, or the lot of the men in the service of the sovereign, is to be blind indeed.

ALL things in a state are connected together. When one of its parts is out of order, it is *that* which should be put in order again, instead of making all the others subservient to it. We should imitate a wise general, who, when he

sees

sees some soldiers straggling, does not order the army to follow them, but obliges them to come into the lines again; thus when an impost is too light or too heavy, weighs too much on one side, or not enough on another, it is this impost which should be modified, instead of troubling all the relations established in the community, by exciting a rise in the price of corn, and a sort of convulsion in the general harmony, a convulsion which may render the source of the evil we experience more obscure, but which almost never fails to aggravate and to extend it.

C H A P. XVIII.

*Relation of the Price of Corn to that of
the other Productions of the Earth.*

I HAVE shewn that the *constant* high price of corn was indifferent to the proprietors of land, because the price of labour and the sum of the imposts keeping proportion to it, they had never more than the same quantity of goods for the same quantity of corn.

I SHALL now lay open an objection which I have raised to myself.

THE value which proceeds from labour only, may be conformable to the price of subsistence: thus a stone taken out of a public quarry, and adapted by labour to an edifice, can only represent the price of the time of the men who drew it out of the ground, and who fashioned it; but there are many other goods, such as fruits, garden-stuff, wines, metals, which have a value independant of labour, and solely in proportion

proportion to their scarcity, or to the greater or smaller estimation which men set upon them. Now if the price of corn affects the price of labour only, and does not govern that of those productions we have been speaking of, it follows that in several kinds of exchanges, the proprietors of corn have a great interest in the constant high price of it.

SUCH an observation deserves, without doubt, to be examined.

THERE must necessarily be between the different fruits of the earth, some comparative value independant of the price of labour,

THE produce of an acre of vineyard in Burgundy must be worth more than the produce of arable land; in like manner, other proportions there are between the produce of an acre of wood, of hemp, or of meadow; but as all these primitive proportions depend on the permanent relations between the needs of man, and the greater or less scarcity of the goods whereof the ground is productive, these

these proportions remain subject to the same laws, as long as no particular circumstance occurs to favour one of these objects of commerce at the expence of the other.

BUT, say they, is not this what happens, when the free exportation of some fruits of the earth is permitted, and that of corn is not? Is not the interest of the proprietors of corn then counter-acted, in as much as the price of some products is raised by that liberty, whilst that of corn is restrained within certain bounds by a prohibition?

IN fine, must not this diversity of regulations excite one culture at the expence of another?

HERE are two different questions.

DOTH the free exportation of certain fruits of the earth hurt the proprietors of corn?

DOTH this liberty hurt the culture of arable land?

I OBSERVE first, that these two questions are of no weight but in proportion

to the quantity of the fruits of the earth which are exported to foreign nations; this we must try to find out. We shall perceive that it is a very small object, in comparison of the fruits which are consumed within the kingdom.

THE soil of France, though the most favoured in Europe, is only divided into arable (which produces grain of all kinds, hemp and flax) woods, kitchen-gardens, vineyards, and meadows.

FRANCE almost never exports the produce of her forests, of her meadows, and of her gardens; the nature of these goods and the expence of freight preventing it.

THE flax and hemp are converted into cloths and laces, of which cargoes are sent abroad; but the first material is generally of so small value in comparison of that which labour adds to it, that, in this kind, the produce of the earth is, one may say, only an implement of manufacture.

REMAINS then the wines, and amongst them only the most precious, not only

because the others can neither bear carriage, nor the expences of it, but also because several foreign nations having laid considerable duties on the importation of French wines, by the tun and not *ad valorem*, it is impracticable to deal in any but those of a superior quality; and as there is only one kind of soil proper for that growth, the extent of that trade is, in a manner, bounded by the nature of things.

LET us now examine if this kind of exportation is hurtful to the proprietors of corn, or to arable culture; two circumstances which must always be considered apart.

THE free export of wines raises the price of that liquor upon the proprietors of corn; but at the same time this commerce augments the value of corn, not only by the money it brings into France, and which, by increasing annually the current cash, raises the price of all productions; but also because the culture of vineyards, the produce of which is
fold

fold to foreigners, considerably multiplies the consumers of corn, as this culture employs the greatest number of hands. Now if we augment the number of buyers of corn, without augmenting the quantity of it, we certainly advance the price of it.

BUT does not the free exportation of wines, by encreasing the quantity of vineyard, diminish that of arable land? and must we not, in order to give the latter all the extent possible, permit the exportation of corn at all times?

I DOUBT this permission would not restrict the extent of ground now appropriated to the production of wines for the foreign market; not only because the soil proper for vines is not always fit for growing corn, but also because all the wines for exportation being of the first growths, the lands proper for producing them are too precious to make it ever worth the owners while to employ them for any other purpose.

BESIDES,

BESIDES, were it possible for France to pay for those foreign commodities in corn which she now pays for in wine, she would have more arable land indeed than she has at present, but she would have less corn eaten at home; for if 100,000 acres of vineyard are sufficient to furnish those better kinds of wine which are now sold to foreigners, and to pay for those goods which they give us in exchange; it would require, perhaps, the produce of a million of acres of corn to supply the place of it; thus the population of France would be diminished by the number of men that might be subsisted by the produce of 900,000 acres.

IT is then very wisely, that, in the necessity which all the countries of Europe lie under, of giving part of their productions in exchange for those which they have not, France favours the exportation of her wines.

THE most beneficial commerce for a state is always that whereby she gives

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the produce of one acre of her land for that of several acres of another country, or the labour of one of her inhabitants for the labour of several foreigners; and this kind of commerce belongs only to nations favoured by nature.

WHAT does it signify (say some modern books) one thing is always exchanged for another of equal value.

THIS proposition is not just.

IN two countries of a million of acres each, let us suppose that different dealers exchange the produce of a hundred thousand acres in one of the countries against the produce of two hundred thousand acres in the other country; these dealers will have made a truck between them equal in opinion, but the two countries will have made a very unequal one, since after this exchange, one will have the produce of 900,000 acres remaining, and the other only that of 800,000.

LET us suppose however, that, by chance, the export of wines should appear

pear to go to too great a length, and that it should seem to hurt the culture of corn; an addition of impost on their exportation would diminish that of the middling wines; and it would be much better to moderate that exportation in this manner, than to gain back some thousand acres of vineyard, by exciting a rise in the price of corn, by an unlimited liberty, and thus disturbing the harmony established between the price of the necessaries of life, and that of labour; for, as we have already said, in the pursuit of any object, the great circumstances are not to be subjected to the small, but the small should be adapted to the great.

ANOTHER important consideration occurs on this subject, viz. If in order to subject all the productions of the earth to the same laws, the free exportation of corn must be permitted, because that of wines is permitted; there would be much more reason to forbid the exportation of corn, because the

exportation of a multitude of other productions is impossible.

GARDEN stuff, most kinds of fruit, flesh-meats, forrage, fire-wood, poor wines, game, fresh water fish, and many other gifts of the earth, are not objects of distant commerce; and it is more important to keep the price of corn in equilibrio with this immense quantity of productions, than with that part of our wines which France sells to foreigners.

SHOULD I be told, that the exportation of all these articles I have just named is permitted; it is permitted by law, no doubt, but the moral impossibility of transporting these different commodities, is tantamount in this hypothesis to a prohibition; a liberty without the power of exercising it, is not a liberty: 'Tis not words here, that we must compare, 'tis the divers effects of that liberty which we must study, and maintain, if possible, in a prudent harmony.

C H A P. XIX.

*The Relation of the Price of Corn to
foreign Goods.*

WE have seen, that the amount of imposts, that the fruits of labour and industry proportion themselves, in some space of time, to the price of the necessaries of life; we have shewn that there also exists certain constant proportions between the price of corn, and most of the other productions of the earth.

LET us now examine what is the relation between the price of corn and that of the foreign commodities which are brought into the kingdom.

THERE is no doubt, that for all countries little favoured by nature, the constant high price of corn is an advantage, as they have no peculiar productions, nor arts or manufactures, and are constrained to pay for foreign goods with this necessary of life.

CORN is the only political money of such nations, and the higher its value is carried, the more of other riches will they receive in return; but such a country would then be in the case of those which, unkindly treated by nature, or in a kind of infancy and barbarism, ought constantly to permit the exportation of corn, as we have explained it, in treating, at the beginning of this work, of the general principles of exportation.

HERE, however, it may be observed, that if two states have a very different interest in the dearness of corn, that of the proprietors is every where the same; they may be indifferent to the value of their corn in respect to the different relations which we have run through; but the constant high price of corn is of consequence to them as to that part of their income which they employ to buy foreign commodities, seeing the course of corn in a country can have no influence on that of goods bought in another kingdom.

I SEARCH for the truth, and am not the defender of a system; I shall therefore readily allow, that it is on account of this kind of exchanges that the proprietors have the greatest interest in the constant dearness of this commodity.

Not, however, but that the price of corn in a country has some effect on the price of foreign goods sold in it; for the price at which a thing is sold depends not only on the price at which it is bought, but also on the more or less advantageous means of paying for it; and these means depend in part on the moderation of the price of corn and of labour, because that moderation, by multiplying and varying industry, increases the number of the objects of exchange, and the resources of commerce; besides, as all merchandises become dearer by the profits of the national agents, who transport, buy, and sell again, the moderate price of the fruits they consume, and of the labour employed for their service, moderates

these profits; and this circumstance influences again the value of the foreign goods brought into a country.

It is only to pursue our subject through all its branches, that we have entered into this last discussion.

For what would it signify, in effect, if there were a relation according to which the constant dearness of corn should be advantageous to the proprietors of it? The community cannot be interested in procuring them the greatest possible advantage, but in so far as the progress of agriculture should depend on that condition. This is what we shall examine in the following chapter.

C H A P. XX.

Distinction between the Interest of the Proprietors of Corn, and the Encouragements necessary for Agriculture.

THE progress of agriculture is not strictly attached to the greatest extent of the profit of the proprietors of land: gain excites them, without doubt, to cultivate; but where ten degrees of strength suffice, half a degree more is superfluous; the soil which yields six for one is cultivated, and so is that which yields only five and three quarters for one; and all the lands of a kingdom would be cultivated when even, under a regulation dictated by the general good, there should happen a chance which should not coincide with the greatest possible extent of the profit of the proprietors of corn.

BESIDES, I shall next make it appear, that this profit rests upon hypothetical bases, and such as are necessarily variable.

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THE advantage of the proprietor is always the result of a comparison between the value of the land he possesses, considered as a capital, and the revenue he draws from it.

LET us suppose that he has received from his ancestors, or that he buys for 80,000 livres, an estate which (as long as corn is at twenty livres the septier) yields him a rent of 2,000 livres, the fortieth part of the purchase money, or $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. he won't fail to solicit for every law that may raise the price of his commodity, and to effect it, he will found forth the infinite advantage of agriculture, &c.: at last his vows are answered, the price rises to thirty livres, and his estate then yields him the thirtieth penny*.

THE revenue of this estate thus raised from two to three thousand livres, if the general rate established for the price of land is forty years purchase, when this estate shall pass into the hands of ano-

* It is in fact the $26\frac{2}{3}$ penny. Tr.

ther

the proprietor, either by sale or by a partition of the fortune of the family, he will receive it on the footing of 120,000 livres, instead of the 80,000 which his predecessor paid for it.

THEN this new proprietor will get only the fortieth penny from his land, though the price of corn is at thirty livres; and he will have as good reasons as he that went before him, to demand, in the name of agriculture, that the price should rise to forty-five livres, that he in his turn may have the thirtieth instead of the fortieth penny; and thus there would be no end to the rise of corn, if the wish of even the most reasonable proprietors was heard.

IN general, it is but too common to see the interest of the proprietors confounded with that of agriculture, the interest of the manufacturers with that of the manufactures, the interest of the merchants with that of commerce; and yet these are so many different objects, which it is necessary to distinguish from each other.

A GOVERNMENT solely guided by the wish of these three different classes of society, can never favour one of them without restriction, but at the expence of the general harmony; whereas the degrees of encouragement which are due to agriculture, to commerce, and to industry, can never be known but by studying that salutary harmony, the aim of all the thoughts of the real statesman.

C H A P. XXI.

The temporary Rises of the Price of Corn are very hurtful to Manufactures.

WE shall not dwell on the prejudice done to manufactures by the sensible rises in the price of corn, the inevitable effect of a free exportation, since we have already had occasion to shew that the labouring men are necessarily the victims of it: these rises keep the workmen in a state of uneasiness

ness and discontent, which hurts their diligence; they are often even discouraged by the reduction of their profits, and having no estate but their industry, a kind of moveable wealth, which needs no packing up, they transport themselves elsewhere; and more than once the dearness of corn has been seen to overturn a manufactory, or at least to suspend its activity for a long time.

C H A P. XXII.

The constant high Price of Corn is prejudicial to the Manufactures destined for the Use of the Nation.

IF the constant price of corn is of little importance to the proprietors of land, it would seem that it should be equally indifferent to the man employed in industry, as his day's wages must be in proportion to it. Nevertheless, this proposition is just only in certain respects; let us endeavour to point out the distinction requisite.

THE constant price of corn is indifferent to that class of workmen who have nothing to fear from foreign competition; such are those who labour the ground, domestics of every kind, masons, carpenters, and, in a word, all persons whose industry does not consist in transportable works, but in services which require their presence.

To this enumeration may likewise be added the manufacturers of transportable works, but such whose too small price or too great bulk, prevents foreigners, who are obliged to pay the expence of carriage, from becoming competitors to the national workmen.

ALL this class of the industrious are sure that, in a given time, the price of their labours will be proportioned to the price of subsistence; thus the constant price of corn is as indifferent to them, as to the class of proprietors.

BUT all the workers in galoons, in embroideries, in laces, in watches, in jewelry of every kind, &c. may be in danger

danger of foreign competition, because the expence of transport forms no considerable object on precious merchandises, nor even on common ones when they are of small bulk.

BESIDES, these expences of transport, added to the price of several foreign works, will not make them come dearer than others of the same kind made in France, if these should be made of materials produced in a foreign country, since the expence of bringing in these materials would make a part of the price at which the French manufacturer could sell; and yet such are cloths made of Spanish wool, Lyons stuffs made of Valentia or Piedmontese silk, stuffs mixed with Levant cotton, and all jewels composed of the diamonds or the metals brought from the Brasils or from Mexico.

IT results from these different circumstances, that many national manufacturers are greatly interested in the moderate price of subsistence, in order
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that the price of their works may likewise be moderate; and that the proprietors of riches may not find their advantage in giving the preference to the labours of other kingdoms; and this interest of the manufacturers becomes the interest of the community; since whenever we buy works of industry abroad, we favour foreign population and wealth, at the expence of the national prosperity.

If the other states of Europe furnished France with all the articles we have now mentioned, she would have much less money, and infinitely fewer people.

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OBJECTION.

IT may be said, perhaps, that all the manufacturers, however numerous they may be, are a small portion of the people, since the multitude is composed of those

those men who do the coarse work, and need not fear foreign competition, according to my own observation.

It is true; but when we lose manufacturers, it is not them alone of whom we are deprived, it is likewise of all those artificers who labour for their service, who make their cloaths, their shoes, their hats, &c. for the distribution of subsistence is made from the first proprietor to the last consumer, by a successive gradation. A proprietor pays for a *Gobelins*'s tapestry, a sum of money representing the annual subsistence in corn of five hundred persons; the director of the manufactory gives one part of it to the workmen who draw the patterns, another to those who weave it, and he distributes his own proper gain to other industrious men who are subservient to his will, or work for his convenience; these men receive from him, not only their food, but also that of various artificers whom they are obliged to employ; and thus is made the repartition of subsistances,

sistances, or of the money which represents them.

It is not then in the workshops of the master of a manufactory, that you spy all the workmen that owe their subsistence to him.

In fine, excepting by alms, no man without property is fed but by means of a labour agreeable to some body; thus there is a strict relation between the multiplication of works, and the maintenance or the encrease of population.

SECOND OBJECTION.

Prohibitory Laws.

I OUGHT to answer another objection.

WHATEVER may be the price of labour in France, it seems that foreign competition need not be feared, as *that* is prevented by the laws prohibiting the importation of certain goods.

THIS

THIS remark is true only to a certain degree, because these prohibitory laws do not form a compleat obstacle; it is estimated at five, six, or ten per cent. according to the vigilance of the revenue officers; and according to the nature of the places; thus such institutions as preserve the price of labour at a moderate rate, and which encrease and diversify the national industry, are the best and least expensive guards against foreign competition.

MOREOVER, it well deserves to be remarked here, that the obstacles put to the free exportation of corn, and the laws prohibiting importation into the kingdom, flow from the same source; the aim of both these precautions, is the encouragement of national labour, and the support of population. Should they adopt in France the system of an unlimited liberty in the commerce of corn, the obstacles put to the introduction of several foreign merchandises, would become doubly useful; but the

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persons

persons who declare in favour of a free exportation, cry out with as much violence against the laws prohibiting importation into the kingdom, and there are few which are spoken of with so much contempt; there are few whose scope is more paternal; they tend to preserve employment to the children of the country, in order to secure to them the subsistence which is the price of it; and thus to augment population and the public strength.

If all nations should consent to remove the barriers of commerce which at present subsist betwixt them, France without doubt would gain by it; the degree of perfection to which her industry has arrived, would promise her a great superiority for a long time to come.

BUT, it is alledged, independantly of this reciprocity, the free entry of foreign manufactures should be permitted, since, if they can be bought cheaper than those of France, it is an
 advantage

advantage to the consumers, and consequently to the state whereof they are members.

THIS reasoning is illusory. The advantage of the state can never be the effect of the advantage of individuals, if that advantage is hurtful to the riches of the public.

LET us shew the application of this principle to the question in hand.

LET us suppose that foreigners could furnish a thousand yards of stuff for a thousand septiers of corn, or for an equivalent sum of money, whilst eleven hundred must be distributed amongst the natural workmen, in order to obtain from them the same labour; the consumers left to their free choice would certainly avail themselves of this difference; but the community would be exposed to lose the inhabitants which this manufacture employed, and which these thousand septiers given to foreigners could feed.

VERY well ! cries a declaimer ; so, according to your reasoning, if foreigners offered us two thousand yards of stuff for two septiers, still we ought to refuse them, because by this exchange we should lose a man.

It is the great artifice in political oeconomy, to push truths to an extremity, thereby to change them into errors ; not one of them can support this trial, and the reason of it is plain ; all questions of commerce depend on certain relations, and these relations are themselves founded on circumstances ordained by nature, and which are not susceptible of a great latitude.

For instance, it may be positively affirmed, that it is conformable to the interest of the state, to banish all productions of foreign industry ; for if we compare the fertility of the soil of France with that of other countries, and the skill of its inhabitants with that of other men, we shall soon perceive the bounds of the oeconomy which the
highest

highest degree of foreign industry can offer us; and it becomes evident that this oeconomy could not compensate for the sacrifices of population and of money to which such a commerce would expose the kingdom. But if, by miracle, the nature of the men and of the soil should instantaneously become different in any particular country in Europe, and that it should be able to afford a thousand yards of stuff for two septiers, then our reasoning will change, with the change of the system of nature*.

It

* Muslins are the only manufacture whose introduction is permitted in all the countries of Europe indiscriminately. Several motives may have determined sovereigns to this exception.

The extraordinary low price of workmanship in the Indies, where five or six sou's a day (i. e. about 3 d. sterling), are sufficient for the needs of the workman.

The necessity we should have lain under of going equally to seek in these countries the materials of these muslins, seeing the cottons of America and of the Levant would not have sufficed for this immense manufacture.

It will not, surely, be said, that if the liberty demanded should destroy some manufactures, the workmen in these manufactures would betake themselves to other works which would be sold to foreigners, and that thus population and riches would not be obstructed: this reasoning would only be just as far as a reciprocity of commerce should be established, and it doth not exist. Yet without such a reciprocity, without a convention

The obstacles which the Indians might have put to this exportation, when they came to feel it was prejudicial to their interests.

In fine, the kind of tacit agreement which the nations of Europe had made to admit these muslins; an agreement which lessened for them all, the inconvenience of this commerce; since this uniformity of conduct obliged them, each according to its abilities, to concur in the tribute of money imposed by India upon Europe; and in this manner the same proportions of riches were maintained between all the rival nations, the only conditions necessary in the political estimation of metals. Thus the Indian commerce (before the conquests of the English) was only a means of relieving equally all the states of Europe, from the inconvenience which the annual encrease of gold and silver produced in the circulation.

convention which would secure it, France, in abolishing her prohibitory laws, would only assist the population and wealth of other nations, at the expence of her own resources.

HERE the adversaries of prohibitory laws will confine themselves to maintain, that if these laws do not appear hurtful, they are at least useless; the nature of things, say they, would alone guard against the introduction of foreign works, for the expence of carriage, to which they would be liable, would necessarily render these works dearer than the productions of national industry.

BUT I have already shewn in the beginning of this chapter, that foreigners, possessed of the raw materials, could sell the goods made of those materials, as cheap as the French could do; I need now only point out how these foreigners would often obtain the preference, if no prohibitory law opposed it.

ALL

ALL the maritime and frontier part of France is more distant from the inland provinces of the kingdom, than the countries which surround it. This observation I have already made when treating of the commerce of corn, and it is likewise applicable to that of manufactures. But there are considerations of still greater importance.

THE states which have no fortified places to guard, no armies to pay, who have no national debt, need not establish considerable imposts, and are able, by means of this exemption, to procure considerable advantages to their manufactures. They have then, in this respect, a natural superiority over communities obliged, as France is, to all these kinds of expence; and if that kingdom permitted at all times the exportation of corn, and the importation of foreign manufactures, it would happen that, in less than a century perhaps, part of her manufactories would be transported into Switzerland, or into
other

other countries which, by their situation, or by the nature of their government, are free from that load of imposts, to which France and other kingdoms are subject. In fine, if a state should even be subject to the same proportion of imposts as France is, a different distribution of these imposts would often be sufficient, to enable it to introduce part of its manufactures into that kingdom; for example, if France had put a stamp-duty on all plate and jewelry, these kinds of works would be brought there and sold to profit by the nations which had not laid on that duty.

It is then visible, that there is a close connection between prohibitory laws and all the political establishments of a community.

I MIGHT further remark, that it is not out of motives of œconomy only, that some goods have the preference; for fancy, imagination, the fashion, can easily balance a slight difference in price; and the manufactures of
Lyons,

Lyons, of Sedan, of Elbeuf, and of Louviers, would be often in great danger, if they had nothing to defend them against the competition of the English cloths and the India silks, but the saving they offer to the buyers.

It is further alledged in favour of the free introduction of foreign manufactures, that it is a means of exciting the national industry; but emulation doth not depend on the greatest possible number of rivals, and France contains more manufacturers and workmen than is requisite, in order to expect from them all that can be produced by abilities excited by vanity, competition, and the love of gain. Besides, it is not in order to lend a hand to all the refinements of internal luxury, that political œconomy should desire the perfection of the national manufactures; it is to secure them the superiority in foreign commerce; and to this kind of emulation, the introduction of foreign manufactures into the kingdom is not necessary, as the
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contest

contests with them must be out of France.

In fine, we are presented in the name of the proprietors with one more objection against prohibitory laws. These laws are unjust, are they made to say, is it not tyrannical to oblige us to buy in France what we could get cheaper in other countries? Are we collected into a community to do us prejudice, or to make us unhappy?

Such objections, if made seriously, are strange deviations from the true principles of society. I shall by and by discuss these great questions of property and liberty; so I shall only observe at present, that this complaint which is put into the mouths of the proprietors would tend equally to make every social impost be looked on as an injustice, for there is not one of them that does not heighten the price of our home-manufactures, on these very proprietors. It is not possible to procure them the security, the order, and the tranquillity, which

which they wish for in the lap of indolence, without political institutions to maintain population and public riches; and the most gentle, the most moderate are prohibitory laws, when they are contained within such reasonable bounds as they are in France.

For the maintenance of the social harmony, for securing between all the inhabitants of a kingdom those relations so necessary to the quiet and to the power of nations, some easy sacrifices may surely be required at the hands of those happy beings, who possess such vast properties, and dispose of such vast superfluities; no privileges now are reserved to them; and more than that, the laws are solicitous not to offend their tastes; they do not prohibit the entry of such goods as the kingdom has not, they oppose nothing but the introducing those objects of luxury or of fancy of the same nature with those made in France; how can it but be acknowledged that these are wise laws,

conformable to many others, which adjust the various interests of individuals with the general prosperity.

THE monarch is applauded when he fortifies a frontier place, when he keeps foldiers and mariners for the defence of the state, when he levies the imposts necessary for these expences; how then can he be blamed for watching at the same time over the laws which put the kingdom in a situation to provide for these different needs? Shall he employ the public strength; and shall he not take care to keep it up? Shall he say, in the name of the community which he represents, So many men and so much money is requisite for our security, and shall he not consider how to multiply in this community the sources of riches and of population?

No; these ideas are linked together; all those which tend to the general good belong to the sovereign; and the study of them makes an essential part of the august functions confided to him.

C H A P. XXIII.

The constant Liberty of exporting Corn hurts the Commerce of national Manufactures with Foreigners. The Superiority of this Commerce above that of Corn.

HITHERTO we have considered the inconveniencies of the constant high price of subsistence and workmanship, relatively to the productions of French industry, which are consumed within the kingdom; but the effect of this high price is still worse to that part of the national manufactures which is sold to foreigners, and is consequently the most beneficial of all exchanges.

AMONGST all the means which France has of paying for the goods she wants, the most advantageous, without all dispute, is the sale of her works of industry; this commerce is more beneficial than that of her wines, though this latter is preferable to the sale of corn.

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Let us, if possible, render this gradation sensible, as it is very important in order to form a right judgement on the greatest part of æconomical questions.

ONE hundred thousand cwt. of tobacco must be annually purchased from Carolina. (North America).

IF this is paid for by one hundred thousand septiers of corn, the produce of twenty thousand acres of land, the nation is deprived of the number of men which these twenty thousand acres could feed.

IF the same quantity of tobacco is paid for by the produce of five thousand acres of vineyard, the population is only diminished by the number of inhabitants which these five thousand acres could maintain: this is better than paying for it in corn.

BUT if this tobacco can be paid for by the mere labour of men, it will be still better; for their time only, and not the produce of the land which could feed them, is sold: it is then this kind

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of exchange which gives the greatest extent to population.

I KNOW well that almost all the objects of industry are composed of the produce of the earth; but when the value of those works springs principally from labour, the portion of earth allotted to the first material is almost imperceptible.

IF the flax produced by an acre, was the first material of laces, valued at 100,000 livres :

IF the silk-worms fed on one mulberry tree, became that of a stuff rendered precious by the perfection of art and of taste :

IF a tree in the forest was the first material of the ingenious and varied labours of an able sculptor; if an inch square of metal was that of one of Julien le Roy's watches; an ounce of paint, that of a picture of Vernet's; certainly we might consider the price of all these precious objects, as springing solely from the labour of man.

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It is then manifest, that the more the value of the merchandises sold to foreigners is composed of the price of labour, the more the commerce carried on is favourable to the national population.

If you sell, suppose, the raw materials produced by 100,000 acres, you lose, perhaps, the means of subsisting 100,000 men.

If you sell at the same price the produce of 50,000 acres, cultivated by 50,000 men, you lose only the means of subsisting 50,000 men.

AND by continuing this gradation, you will see that the best exchange would be that of the product of one thousand acres worked up by the labour of 99,000 men *.

* It is obvious that in comparing here the produce of an acre to the keeping of a man, I do it only to present an easy measure; and not to determine what is precisely necessary for the maintenance of every individual.

YET it is asserted in several books on this subject, that the sale of corn is the most advantageous to a nation. Do men think so, because they interest themselves, not in the population, but in the riches of a country? I shall easily shew that under this last point of view, the commerce of manufactures is equally the most expedient.

WHAT! will they say, are not the expences of a workman equal to the recompence which he receives for his labour? and is not this expence equal to the productions of the earth which he consumes, or gives to his family to consume, and to the people who make him his clothes, his shoes, his hat, &c. The money which he receives and which he distributes, does it represent any thing but these different needs? Thus the total value of the labour must be equal to the total value of the productions of the earth which the workmen consume, or of which they dispose.

IT is to be observed, that even when riches are taken for the sole aim of po-

litical speculations, the reasonings the most favourable to the commerce of corn, go no further than to parallel it to that of manufactures; but it is easy to destroy even this parity.

LET us suppose a man to be both sovereign and proprietor of a whole kingdom, disdaining the augmentation of population, and bounding all his wishes to the acquisition of money; let us see, in order to attain it, what commerce he would favour.

IF the whole kingdom whereof I am proprietor, would he say to himself, produced only corn, their reasoning would be just, and it would be the same thing to me whether I sold corn or labour: but besides the land fit for the plow, I have other which is only fit for pasturage, or to produce wood, or fruits; I have rivers which contain only fish; quarries which contain only stones for building; I have houses and public edifices, and many other kinds of goods, in short, which are not transportable; how then shall I convert them into money?

THERE is only one means of doing it; instead of selling my corn to foreigners, I will distribute it to new inhabitants in my kingdom. Each of them must have besides, wood, a house, fruits, and, in a word, part of these different productions which I cannot export; their value however will make a part of the price of their labour; thus in selling *that* to other nations, I shall have found the secret of converting into the precious metals, a multitude of goods, with which it was not possible for me to carry on a foreign commerce.

THUS, without interesting myself in the least in population, but merely through love of money, I ought to prefer the commerce of manufactures to that of the necessaries of life.

WE must still make another remark, which is essential to the support of these different considerations.

THE price of common rude labour is composed of the value of the different products necessary for the labourers; but

the price of ability, or of any kind of rare and peculiar industry, is further composed of a certain sum, which is not spent but laid up. This desire of acquiring in order to keep, to accumulate, and to produce fresh gains, is a general sentiment; and from this moral circumstance, it results, that the value of the labour of artists and workmen is infinitely superior to the sum of their expences, and consequently to that of their consumptions.

LET us make this truth sensible; a good painter in the course of a year makes a certain number of pictures, which are sold to foreigners, and which bring into France ten thousand crowns; the painter however chuses to spend only five thousand of them; thus, when even all the productions which he, his family, and his servants have consumed, could have been sold to foreigners, it is certain they could have yielded to the kingdom only the half of the price of the painter's labour.

THIS striking example may be applied to all the sons of industry, from the celebrated artist, or the master of a manufactory, who lays up ten thousand livres a year, to the rudest labourer who saves only a crown.

LET us then conclude, that of all the manners of paying for foreign commodities, the most advantageous to a kingdom, is the sale of time, that is, the sale of the productions of industry; but as the preference which the buyers give to the manufactures of one country above another, is partly founded on a comparison of the prices, and that these prices are regulated by the value of workmanship, which depends, in its turn, on the rate of subsistence, it is obvious how much the constant moderate price of corn imports that commerce which is the most advantageous to France.



OBJECTION.

WHY should this kingdom fear the competition of other nations in its foreign commerce? Has it not productions so peculiar to itself that foreigners are forced to buy them? And in that case, the more such productions are heightened by the high price of workmanship, the more the state will gain by it, since it will receive so much the more foreign goods in exchange.

THERE are, without doubt, some productions peculiar to a country, and when they are at the same time generally sought after, the high price of the labour necessary for their culture would be no obstacle to their sale: but the number of these productions is too small to form a general rule upon it; and so much the more so, because by a duty on exportation, it is always easy to raise
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the price of these productions on foreigners, when it is thought adviseable. This is what France observes with regard to her wines; it is what Holland practises, in another shape, in regard to her spices; and Portugal, as to her diamonds, by committing the sale of them to the hands of an exclusive company, which raises the price of them without any fear of competition.

As to manufactures, and all works which depend solely on the abilities and industry of men, they can never be looked on as a thing belonging to one nation; industry is not an exclusive property, and the men who are endowed with any particular talent, are not themselves the certain property of the state where they live; for they belong to that land where they shall find most happiness.

THERE is, however, one kind of the works of industry which seems the peculiar property of France; that is those whose value consists principally either
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in the taste, a sort of rapid and flexible intelligence, which requires to be exercised by the variety of expences, or in the renewal of fashions, a species of emulation which reigns in a country where vast properties make the subsistence of many depend on the expence of one; where immense riches of every kind, amassed through time, command the industrious to produce new inventions under pain of being neglected; where art is further obliged to vary and to renew itself, in proportion to the indifferency and the squeamishness of the rich, jaded by the very use of their fortune, and by the sight of the luxury wherewith they are surrounded.

It is these various circumstances, peculiar to a magnificent, lively, and light nation, that carry the works of industry to perfection, and strike out new ideas for them; and as taste is not a demonstrative science, a reputation of this kind is a good title to it. It is thus that France governs the fashion by her example;

ample; and as jewels, stuffs, trimmings, and other articles of luxury, form an essential branch of her commerce; by changing her whims in this respect continually, she obliges foreigners to vary their expences, and, in this relation, her very inconstancy contributes to her wealth.

IT is then probable that the rise of the price of workmanship in France, would not sensibly hurt the sale of those works whose principal value depends on taste or on fashion; and doubtless it is owing to this, that they have, without inconvenience, been made subject to some duties on exportation.

IT is these duties, established on the frontiers of the kingdom, which supply the insufficiency of the general principles in political œconomy, and the impossibility of making any absolute law either for or against the importation of foreign, and the exportation of national, merchandises.

THE study of these duties appears to me very important; and we shall easily discover

discover that frequently it bears a relation to the different questions which we have gone through.

THERE are foreign merchandises whose price must never be heightened by duties on importation, as they are the raw materials of several manufactures, an essential object of the commerce of France with other countries; such are gold and silver, of which are made jewels and plate; the wools of Spain, of which are made cloths; and the silks of Spain and Piedmont, of which are made stuffs, &c.

THERE are foreign merchandises on which it is expedient to lay an impost, because they are not necessary, and because that impost falls on the rich only; of this class are tobacco's, muslins, spices, cordial wines, &c.

THERE are, in fine, foreign works whose introduction should be absolutely prohibited, in order that the national labour, applied to the like objects, may not be discouraged; such are cloths,
linens,

linens, silk stuffs, gold and silver laces, and many other manufactures of the same kind.

ON the other hand, should be prohibited the exportation of the implements of trade, and of raw materials, which might enable foreigners to do without the French industry.

THERE is a small number of productions, the prices of which it may be proper to heighten by duties on exportation, either to moderate the exportation and the culture of them, or to force foreigners to pay as dear for them as they are willing to do ; such are some wines peculiar to France, and for which there is a demand in all the countries of Europe.

THE different productions of national industry ought to be freed from all duties on exportation, because that is the commerce which ought to be the most favoured, and that which has the most to fear from competition ; but if there is a proper exception, it is only applicable

applicable to fashions, and to works whose value springs from the perfection of taste, whilst that taste, or the reputation of it, shall appear to belong exclusively to France.

C H A P. XXIV.

The Question of the Liberty of the Exportation of Corn, examined in the Relation it bears to human Nature.

HITHERTO we have examined the liberty of the exportation of corn, only under an abstract point of view, that is, as it affects population and riches; it remains that we consider the same subject in the relation it bears to the opinion of men, such as they now are, and such as they will always be.

WERE the free exportation of corn as favourable to the public prosperity, as I believe it is contrary to it, yet how could a law which should authorise it constantly

constantly be enforced? How could the passions of the people be brought to submit to it? The bread which feeds them, the religion which consoles them, these are their only ideas, they will always be as simple as themselves; the prosperity of the state, future ages, the rising generation, are words which cannot strike them; their only connection with the community is by their sufferings, and into all that immense space called *Futurity*, the poor man never looks farther forward than to the morrow; he is deprived by his indigence, of all more remote interest.

THUS when he shall see the price of corn rise, and render his subsistence uncertain, how is it possible he should not rise against the exportation, or against any political law to which he should impute his misfortunes and his anxiety? In the midst of labour and of indigence he quietly supports the sight of the idleness, of the abundance, and of the apparent happiness of the rich; he habituates

bituates himself to look on them as beings of a different nature; their pomp and their grandeur are a kind of magic which imposes on him; but when an alarm, well or ill founded, about the means of attaining to his subsistence takes hold of him; as this uneasiness strikes the only sentiment to which he is accustomed, his whole energy rouses, and this nation of children, which may be guided with leading-strings in the midst of the inequality of properties, and through a thousand objects of privation and of envy, become so many roaring lions when they are afraid of the want of necessaries.

HERE methinks it is said, that the principles of justice are unalterable, that they never should be made to give way to the passions of men, and that if the people will not hear reason, they must be made to do it by authority.

BUT what is authority when it would enter the lists against a general senti-

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ment?

ment? from that instant it loses all power; besides, every error that is linked to human nature, ought to be treated as a reason.

WHAT a maxim! will it be said; so the prejudices of the people should give the law! Without doubt, they *will* give it every time those prejudices shall be inherent in their nature. But let us not be alarmed at this truth; the people will never have but one powerful and energick sentiment, but one, in fine, which may not be overcome by government, it is that which is linked to their subsistence. They accustom themselves to the insensible rise of the price of corn, because that of their labour becomes proportioned to it; but a sudden and considerable rise will always irritate them; government therefore ought to prevent those changes in the prices, as far as laws can effect it; these laws will correspond, without doubt, with the greatest advantage of the community; but they would still be false, even when they

they should appear to be contrary to the principles which should have been adopted as most conformable to the prosperity of the kingdom; for this prosperity *can* be founded on nothing but the public felicity, and this felicity can never depend solely on a system, because the essential condition of happiness is the belief that we possess it: thus whenever, in order to procure what is reckoned the good of the state, the greater part of the subjects must be kept in uneasiness, this good is then not a good; and this is the reason why all discussion purely abstract in matters of government, is always insufficient. Thus whoever would subject the ruling passion of the people to a general system, will find himself mistaken; it is on the contrary, the system which must be made to correspond with that passion, that is the first *datum* in administration; we must calculate the force of the waves of the sea, when we are about to raise a wall against them on the shore.

WHY all these precautions? We must write, and light will diffuse itself, and with this light, all the passions of the people will change, and possibly we are now at the eve of that happy moment when the force of evidence will govern the world. I wish it may be so; but when this evidence shall be agreed upon between all men who think and who dispute, (an agreement very remote perhaps) it will never have any force with the people, because their stupidity and ignorance spring from the social laws, and will never change.

THE faculty of knowing and understanding is the general gift of nature, but it is developed only by education; if properties were equal, every one would work moderately, and every one would have a little knowledge; because every one would have a portion of time to apply to study and to thought: but in the inequality of fortunes, the effect of the social order, instruction is interdicted to all men born without property;

perty; for all the substances being in the hands of that part of the nation who possess land or money, and nobody giving any thing for nothing, the man born with no resource but his strength, is obliged to devote that, to the service of the proprietors, even from the very first instant it shews itself, and so to continue all his life, from the moment the sun rises, till that when this exhausted strength has need to be recruited by sleep.

WHILST property thus exerts its energy, which is so well seconded by the competition of men pressed on to work, that they may live, what time have they to gain instruction? If the proprietors will feed them, without requiring their whole day's work, if they give them at the same time books and instructors, then the people will be able to reason on the public prosperity; they will perhaps come to comprehend, by the study of an oeconomical calculation, that the dearer bread is, the hap-

pier they must be: till then, their ignorance is our own work, and on that account we should pay some regard to it, and not put ourselves in a passion, when by chance the only sentiment that the people *can* have, and the only interest that we have left to them, disturbs our conveniences.

BESIDES, if the blindness of the people could be dissipated by the light of evidence, the effect of modern science, is it certain that this augmentation of light would be an advantage for the proprietors? If the people were capable of yielding to the strength of abstract truths, would they not at the same time have the faculty of reflecting on the origin of ranks, on the source of properties, and on all the institutions which bear hard on them?

Is it certain, in fine, that this inequality of knowledge is not become necessary to the maintenance of all the social inequalities which gave it birth? But these inequalities will never cease,
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and the people in all times will be always the same; they never would hear reason on the dearneſs of bread, nor will they ever hear it.

IN England, where by the nature of the government, and by the higher rate of wages, the people are leſs people, and participate more in the augmentation of general knowledge, they become equally untractable whenever too ſenſible a riſe happens in the price of corn; and for ſome years paſt, the uneaſineſs on this head, and reſtraints of all ſorts are multiplied there; yet how many circumſtances are there which render the alterations in the price of corn much more important in France than in England!

THERE are no holidays in England; there are many in France, ſo that the labour of three days muſt ſupply food for four *; and by that means

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* This is an exaggeration, and not to be taken literally; and in moſt Roman catholic countries they are daily reducing the number of non-working holidays.

every disproportion between the price of corn and that of labour must be more

holidays. There is an usage in these popish countries which may perhaps deserve the consideration of the inhabitants of a protestant country: in time of harvest, a man may obtain permission to work on Sunday after he has heard mass, for that is insisted on, and that he scrupulously observes. In England a man does not go to church, (though required indeed by law) and he must not work, though the changeableness of our climate makes it more necessary here than in many other countries. Might not we *reformed* reform our practice in this (and possibly in some other instances) by their example, though we have justly and necessarily rejected their errors and corruptions? In the times immediately preceding the reformation, the over-rigid observance of the sabbath was complained of, by all who had a tendency to reformation, as an abuse; they called it *judaising*. (In about a century it became a badge of puritanism). It has for a good many years been the custom in England (though against law) for wind-mills to work on Sundays, under colour that the wind does not always serve: in London, milk and mackerel may, by statute, be cried for sale on Sundays, because of their perishable nature; but not herrings, &c. though equally perishable. In one word, does not the equity of the permission to pull an ass or an ox out of a pit on the sabbath day, extend to securing the corn and hay on the sabbath day? (and every one who has lived in the country knows how much

more sensibly felt by the people of France †.

THIS kingdom contains a greater number of inhabitants than Great Britain, in proportion to their respective extents; for it has now about nine hundred men to feed for every square league ‡; a considerable population, if

much of both is destroyed or damaged for want of this permission). Do they not both come under the description of works of necessity and mercy, allowed by all to be performed on the sabbath? Yet if such permission was granted in general, and the people were not at the same time to be, *in fact*, compelled to attend divine service, it is much to be feared the churches would be very empty during those seasons. Let then the people be permitted to preserve the fruits of the earth, but let them at the same time be encouraged, induced, incited, by the example of their superiors, to do their duty towards God, and to attend his public worship, or compelled thereto by the laws now in being; laws which at present are not, dare not, perhaps cannot be put in execution. — But this is a consequence of the wretched relaxation into which government hath fallen, so flagrant, and so much to be deplored in many other instances. *Tr.*

† It appears also from several general observations, that the English eat less bread than the French.

‡ France contains 26,950 square leagues, 25 to a degree; so reckoning 24,000,000 of people, there are 891 inhabitants per square acre.

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we attend to the space of ground destined for other productions.

FURTHER, the people are poor in France, and this is inevitable, because they are numerous, and because they have no means to defend themselves against the empire of the proprietors; whereas in England, the people compose a part of government, in quality of electors of the representatives of the nation. The people of England may have many kinds of interest in the community, those of France none at all, so that every thing must be indifferent to them except the price of bread; and when we see them sometimes assemble tumultuously on public events, it is not that they understand them, it is not to take part in them, as we often love to persuade ourselves to give a greater *eclat* to our passions; it is rather because, carrying constantly about with them the sentiment of their misery, they embrace every opportunity of giving it vent, and of imputing their unhappiness to some body,

body, because they do not know what an abstract cause is, nor will they ever know it.

THERE is still another motive which, methinks, should induce more attention in France than in England, to prevent revolutions in the price of corn; it is that in England the sufferings and the discontents of the people are known almost from their birth; they are, by their constitution, much nearer to the sovereign than the people of France are; whole companies of artisans may carry their grievances to the foot of the throne, and complain there, either of the high price of bread, or of the want of work *; in France, the least meeting

* Yet such applications are seldom made in England but in a tumultuous manner, or from seditious, factious, or unreasonable motives, excepting always the petition of the company of barbers to the king, requesting his majesty to cut off his hair and wear a wig, in order to encourage their trade; but the decency they observed in this *singular* application ought to be ascribed to the prudence, care, and influence of their then clerk. *Tr.*

is prevented, no such thing is lawful *; thus indigence, disease, and death, have destroyed several families before the people dare speak; how agreeable to justice then is it to lend an ear to their sufferings and to prevent them. It is a fine idea in a sovereign to be watchful over the distress of his people, in proportion to the impotence of their complaints, and the facility with which he could crush them.

I NEVER therefore understood a phrase in the preamble of a particular arret of the parliament of Toulouse; it contained, *that the king did not owe subsistence to his people*. Did this mean that the monarch cannot make the seed sprout in the bosom of the earth? this is indeed the operation of providence. Did it mean that he cannot force the proprietors of subsistence to give it for nothing?

* Yet in France the sovereign tribunals, the parliaments, may and do offer representations and remonstrances on all objects of administration; and these may have as much or more weight than if they came from the parties immediately aggrieved,

nothing? this is a truth conformable to justice. But as this phrase related to the commerce of corn, if it meant that the sovereign ought to be indifferent about the laws which can secure plenty in the kingdom, and prevent the sudden disproportions between the price of corn and that of labour; if it advised him to abandon these relations blindly to the pretensions of property and to the caprices of liberty; it would be, in my opinion, a great, a fatal error; it would be to pretend that the sovereign should be insensible to the circumstance the most essential to the happiness of the multitude and to the public order. What! should the representative of the society have power to compel the people to expose their lives for the defence of the state, should he have power to force them to come and extinguish the fire that threatens the house of a rich man, and should he not watch over their subsistence? Should he not establish laws that may secure it? Should he not
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fear the sudden starts of price? Should he not prevent them, if he can? Should he not moderate the abuse of property over indigence, and that of strength over weakness? It would surprize many perhaps, should we say that the laws relative to subsistence are almost the only ones which can soften the lot of the people. They would be surprized to see that they are more efficacious than the diminution of, or even the exemption from imposts.

LET us lay open this idea, in shewing the source of the misery of the people.

C H A P. XXV.

How the Laws about Corn are almost the sole which can soften the Lot of the People. The Sources of their Misery.

MEN often dispute concerning the causes of the unhappiness of the people. The poor sigh over it without

studying it; and the rich, who have time to reflect and to instruct themselves, never fail to impute this unhappiness solely to the excess of imposts, and think they exercise their compassion sufficiently, by accusing the government of ignorance and misconduct, and by saying from time to time at their fire side, The poor people! what they do undergo! whilst their misery is their own work, and the inevitable effect of their rights, and of the usage they make of them.

WE cannot ascertain the meaning of the word *people*, nor the degree of indigence which constitutes it. We cannot comprize under this denomination all men born without property, for there are persons who acquire it by ability, and by particular circumstances; neither can we exclude from it all men born with property, for it may be so small as not to keep them from want; however as all property, however moderate, is a kind of advantage and distinction, and as I am besides obliged
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to give the word *people* a fixed sense, I shall understand by that name, in this work, only that part of the nation born without property, of parents much in the same condition, and who not having had any education, are reduced to their natural faculties, and have no possession but their strength or some coarse and easy art. This is the most numerous class of society, and consequently the most miserable, as their subsistence depends solely on their daily labour.

The people being thus defined, whence comes their misery in all times, in all countries, and what will be the eternal source of it?

It is the power which the proprietors have of giving for the labour which accommodates them, the smallest possible salary, that is, that which represents the barest necessities.

Now this power in the hands of the proprietors is founded on their being a very small number in comparison of the
men

men without property; on the great competition amongst these last, and principally on the prodigious inequality that there is between the men who sell their labour for their daily bread, and those who purchase it merely to augment their luxury or their conveniencies; the one are pressed by the very instant, the others are not; the one will always give the law, the others will always be constrained to receive it *.

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* The author, in this and several other places, seems to carry this idea too far; and not to consider that the rich have by education and habit laid themselves under an artificial necessity of the services of the poor, which, morally speaking, is as cogent upon them as real necessity is upon the latter. Nor do we see that the poor are reduced to *bare* necessities: Every sober and industrious man, barring accidents, may (in all countries, I believe, and certainly in England) and many do, lay up something; the very quantity of liquor which they drink more than is *necessary* for their health or strength (very often more than is good for either) would make a considerable saving; call it only half a pint of beer per diem, it would amount to 1 l. 10 s. 5 d. per annum, to a twelfth part, or above 8 per cent. of their annual income at 1 s. 2 d. per day. What

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then

IT is to these different relations that we must ascribe the empire of the proprietor

then shall we say of the tea, sugar, butter, snuff, tobacco, spirits, &c. consumed by them and their families? What of their loss of time? When a man comes from plow, or cart, or ditching, or any other the hardest labour, so far is his strength from being exhausted by it, that he immediately betakes himself, for his pleasure, to some other kind of hard labour, called Cricket, Skittles, Quoits, pitching the Bar, Wrestling, &c. Could this surplus, this superfluity of strength be put to no profitable use? How many of them have bits of garden ground from whence they draw little or no advantage? In many countries of England, men and all can spin, in others they knit; that and many other arts are easily learnt: part of the produce might be for their own use, and some vent or other they might get for the rest. In Russia almost every peasant weaves a narrow kind of linen, many of them print it themselves: In Scotland many little weavers dye their own yarn, nay the country people in the highlands (as I am told) do the same. During the last war, many of the French prisoners in England made considerable gains by knitting garters, purses, night-caps, &c. nay by selling their allowance of provisions, and buying others of a cheaper quality. Industry therefore is the thing wanting: it is a melancholy truth, that nothing but the fear, nay the feeling of want, will make men in general labour with proper assiduity; and it is well known that weavers, combers, shoemakers,

prietor over the man without property ;
this empire will never change, on the
contrary,

makers, &c. when they can live (though miserably) on four days work, will not work six; very seldom do they work above five. Who has not heard of Saint Monday? To all this idleness, the humane and well-intended, but greatly misapplied, laws for the provision for the poor, have greatly contributed, especially since they have come to think that it is no disgrace to come to the parish; indeed they now in many places seem rather to think it an honour, that it is a tribute they are intitled to command from the public. Whatever necessities cannot be procured by the labour of the individual, *but nothing else*, ought to be supplied by the community, and surely the laws intended to carry it no further; yet under them, what through the negligence of the parish officers, what through *their* mistaken tenderness sometimes, and often through that of the magistrate, idleness, carelessness, and extravagance are encouraged and maintained. Witness the enormous and encreasing poor rates. The poor have been idle and extravagant, but must we give them no food? Enough to support life. Must they have no clothes? Enough to cover their nakedness. Must they have no beds? Straw. *And nothing more*, till by their labour and industry they have earned it; and then may they (and every one of God's creatures!) be plentifully fed, decently clothed, and comfortably lodged. Those who are a little conversant in parish business know how far the practice is different from these rules, how far from the apostolical precept, *he that will not*

contrary, it will augment, by the effect of two circumstances.

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work, neither shall he eat : (the universal law of nature indeed, for he who will not labour, shall neither have meat to eat, nor appetite to eat it.) Without adhering to this, how shall the poor be made to work, or prevented from spending too much? if clothes or furniture are given them, how shall they be prevented from destroying or selling them, and then asking for more? From these abuses arises one of a contrary nature; the parish officers and parishioners having often seen and smarted for the idleness and extravagance of some, are sometimes led to be too harsh and unfeeling towards others, and not to allow them the relief they ought to do; but this happens much more rarely than the other extreme, and where relief is one time improperly denied, it is a hundred times improperly granted; for men are more apt than is commonly imagined to estimate the needs of others by their own feelings, to a certain degree at least, (as the late Dauphin of France, when some were talking to him of the extreme misery of the people, said, Poor wretches, I pity them! but I suppose they get a pullet at least, or some such thing for their supper). Of this we have I think a pregnant instance in our hospitals and good workhouses: we see daily advertisements for the best beef, &c. and with the best of every thing they are fed. And this is carried to such a length, that in the houses of industry in Suffolk, there are numerous applications from the poor for admission, and when once they are admitted they never desire to go out;
and

ONE is, that property tends more to accumulate than to divide. Poverty cannot procure an advantage from lands that require an expence at first outset; it cannot defend itself against arbitrary imposts; it does not usually enjoy the prerogatives annexed to the gentry; small possessions, then, unite insensibly in the hands of the rich, the number of proprietors diminishes, and they can in that case dictate more imperiously to the men whose labour they purchase; for in every exchange, the power of the sellers and of the buyers depends in

and reason good; they live better in every respect, and do less labour, than they would at their own hands; if this was all by the produce of their own labour under good regulations, why not? but the poor's rates to the amount of 2 s. 6 d. or 3 s. in the pound compose the greater part of it, and much of this might be saved to the parishes, were the poor to be maintained in a more frugal manner: and without pretending to define in what manner the poor should be maintained, this may be laid down as an indisputable maxim, That the poor who are maintained on charity, that is by the labour of others, have no right or pretence to live better than the poor who maintain themselves by their own labour. Tr,

part on the respective number of the one and of the others.

THE next circumstance which tends to weaken the resistance of the industrious, in the struggle for their wages, against the proprietors, is that by degrees as a community grows older, there is amassed a very great quantity of works of industry proper for luxury, or for conveniency, seeing that many of these works last longer than a man's life; such are all jewelry, glasses, buildings, diamonds, plate, and many other objects besides; this mass of riches, which daily encreases, establishes a silent and permanent competition against the new labours of workmen, and renders their pretensions more weak.

THE proprietors have then all the power requisite to reduce to the lowest price possible, the recompence of the greatest part of the labours dedicated to their use; and this power is too conformable to their interest, for them ever to give up the making an advantage by it.

LET

LET us suppose then that twenty sou's were the price to which they could reduce the day's wages of a man, obliged to maintain himself and his family.

LET us also suppose that this workman pays a sou a day to the public treasure.

IF this man is discharged from this impost, his day's wages will quickly be reduced to 19 sou's; because the proprietors will always make use of their power, and the workmen are not able to oppose it.

THUS, whatever may be the distribution of imposts, the people are condemned by the effect of the laws of property, never to obtain more than mere necessaries in exchange for their labour. Without, then, destroying these laws, and incessantly troubling the public order by the partition of lands, (a method as unjust as impracticable) the sovereign legislative power can exercise its beneficence towards the people, only by securing to them those bare ne-

cessaries to which they are reduced ; by preserving them from anxiety on that head, by preventing sudden alterations in the prices which disturb the relations settled betwixt their labour and their subsistence ; and all these cares, all these precautions, depend solely on the laws about corn.

LET every one judge now, whether under this point of view, the sovereign ought to occupy himself about the subsistence of his subjects ; it is, in my eyes, his first duty, and the greatest of the means which are deposited in his hands to alleviate the lot of the people, and to defend them from misfortune.

BUT he cannot do it, cry they, but by cramping the rights of property, or those of the liberty of commerce, and these rights are inviolable in their nature ; and to make the smallest incroachment on them, is to shake the foundations of justice, it is to overturn the public order,

How

How much should men be on their guard against certain general words! the more extensive their signification, the more easily are they led into error, because they cannot bring themselves to make any exception to them; even when they see it, they often avoid it, so much do they love to class all their ideas under simple relations; so much do they love to find repose close by the side of effort; and so easy it is for them to make profelytes, when they can promise them that by the help of two or three principles, they shall be initiated into the knowledge of the most abstract subjects; but the social architecture rejects this unity of means, and this simplicity of conception, so dear to our laziness.

AT the same time that the ideas the most dear to men are attached to these words, Property and Liberty, it is to the abuse of these words that we may attribute the greatest misfortunes,

C H A P. XXVI.

*On the Rights of Property, relatively
to the Exportation of Corn.*

MY corn is my own, I can sell it and transport it whithersoever I please; this is the pretension of the proprietor. Nobody has a right to restrain me in my exchanges, and to stop my industry; such is the reasoning of the merchant.

IT is with the respectable names of liberty and property that men captivate suffrages in favour of the exportation of corn; and that they have the air of defending the public cause, whilst they wound it in the most sensible manner.

Hereditary property is a law of men; it was established for their happiness, and it is on that condition that it is maintained. He who, in the origin of society, set some stakes about a piece of ground, and threw into it the seed which nature had produced spontane-

ously in another place, would never have been able to obtain, by this sole title, the exclusive privilege to this ground, for all his descendants to the end of ages; so great an advantage could not belong to so small a merit.

EVEN now, when properties are established irrevocably, if the subsistence of men was not fixed by nature, and if a proprietor could possibly find a pleasure in consuming the food of a thousand men, the privileges of property could not be kept up, and the laws which warrant them would soon be infringed.

WHAT is it then which assures the stability of these privileges? It is because they do not infer the diminution of the human species; it is because the great proprietor cannot eat a thousand portions of bread instead of one; it is because in the permission given to the rich to exchange all their superfluous corn against the labour of men, and thus to live in idleness, the augmentation of happiness which arises to them
from

from this advantage, is too obscure and too uncertain, to interest society in it to so great a degree as to put a stop to it, and for that purpose to overturn the laws which secure inheritances, and which regulate the disposition of all the goods on earth by one general principle; laws which excite industry, which calm anxiety, and without which, society would be a prey to every passion, and to perpetual revolutions.

HOWEVER, the privileges of property have, as you see, an essential relation with the general good; now the same general good which did dictate, and which still upholds them, had the power to annex exceptions to them. Society had a right to say to the proprietors, consistently with the most perfect justice, Each of you shall hold in his hands, the subsistence of a great number of men; we permit you to exact from them, you maintaining them, such labour as you think fit; force them, if you will, to apply themselves
to

to different arts to please you; enjoy all their toil in the lap of indolence; but do not go so far as in preference to them, to feed foreigners; if these have goods which you desire, offer to them in exchange the fruits of the industry of your countrymen; *you* will be satisfied without being wanting to the social sentiments which you owe to the latter.

CAN there be an invitation more conformable to equity? and could the proprietors, without the greatest injustice, and the greatest forgetfulness of the principles which form their strength, answer calmly, You lay us under a restraint; we will feed you if we please, we will feed foreigners if we like it better; we will have no guide in this matter but our interest and our fancy.

WHAT a speech! What then, might they be answered, is not this offer of the community enough for you? To guard your property, in peace and in war, she only asks the preference from
you,

you, in the exchange which you are obliged to make, of the surplus of the fruits of your lands against labour, and you refuse it? Are, then, your title deeds inrolled in heaven? Did you bring your lands from a neighbouring planet, and can you carry them back to it again? What power have you, that you do not derive from the society? You possess, by the effect of a general convention; and that which authorised the proprietors to dispose as they thought fit, of the necessaries of life which were useless to them, might require of them that they should prefer the national purchasers. This subjection, is not a violation of the law of property, it is a condition of it; like many others in society, which set bounds to concessions and to prerogatives, for the common good.

BUT, in short, if you restrain us in our sales, say the proprietors, we won't cultivate any more, and our lands shall lie lee. Idle tales! exaggerations! If the
community

community makes laws which lock up the corn or makes it become a drug, she is to blame; but if she only does not permit a constant exportation of it, if she does not subject the public order to the blind caprice of liberty, she acts wisely; and the proprietors will not suspend their culture, because it may sometimes happen that they can only deal with a nation of 24,000,000 of men, and have only a kingdom of 27,000 square leagues, and a few colonies for their market.

HAVE we not often heard it said likewise, that if you obstruct the introduction of foreign manufactures, you cramp the proprietors, and by so doing, slacken their ardour of cultivation? One would think that the powerful and pressing interest they have to incite them to improve their lands, hung by a thread, always in danger of breaking; and that if they cannot have a suit of English cloth instead of Louviers cloth, they would have no clothes

clothes at all, and would not care whether they had any rents or not.

MEN transfigure every thing by exaggeration; they begin by confounding the importance of the proprietor (a station not at all difficult to fill) with the importance of land; then, the indefinite desires of this proprietor which interest nobody but himself, with his reasonable comfort which interests the whole community. After this jumble, of the slightest whim of the proprietors, they make a public idol, and compel all the world to adore it, under the respectable name of agriculture. It is thus the first reasoning which deviates from truth leads to great errors, as the speculation extends, and consequences are drawn from consequences. Like children who are to walk, blindfold, to a mark, from the instant that they go out of the direct line which leads to it, every step they take is farther out of the way.

THERE is no country where stopping the constant liberty of exporting corn,

Is of less consequence to the welfare of the proprietors, than in France.

THIS kingdom joins to an immense population, a surprising assemblage of all kinds of establishments of industry, a fruitful variety of productions, as well from its own soil as from its colonies; two thousand millions of current cash, riches of every species heaped up by time; what vaster field can there be for commerce? What numerous means open to proprietors, to exchange the surplus of their corn, and to console them when the general welfare prescribes to them to sell this precious article only in their own country.

It is possibly because they were aware of all the prerogatives which are annexed in France to the condition of proprietor, that they refrain in all their writings from demanding in *their* name a free exportation, and make the petition always to be signed by the useful labourer and the poor cultivator.

THE peasant possessed of a few acres cultivates them, without doubt, himself,

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but

but the fruits of them serve to feed his family, and the question of exportation interests him very little.

As to the great proprietors and their farmers who employ labourers and cultivators, all these men are only their servants ; they compose part of the people who live by the labour of their hands, and who do not desire that the price of subsistence should be disturbed by the constant liberty of exportation. Ask that man at the plough-tail, ask that string of reapers who receive in money, the smallest possible recompence, if they desire that subsistence should be dear ; they would be greatly surpris'd, if they could read, to find that it is in their names that it is demanded. It is a great abuse to make compassion for the people serve to fortify the prerogatives of the proprietors ; it is almost imitating the art of those terrible animals, who, on the banks of the great rivers in Asia, assume the voice of children in order to devour men.

C H A P. XXVII.

*On the Rights of Liberty, relatively to
the Exportation of Corn.*

THE rights of liberty, it is said, are as sacred as those of property, and every restraint is an offence against them. Why should you set bounds to industry? Why may not we convert our money into corn, and our corn into money? No body is forced to make these exchanges; we only demand the reciprocal liberty to do it: that liberty is the soul of commerce, and commerce is the source of riches.

ALL these vulgar axioms, respected through habit, are nevertheless susceptible of several distinctions. There is no liberty salutary, but that which does not counteract the general good. *I would do whatever I please:* this is the wish of the single individual. *I would not that any man should be at liberty to do what hurts me:* this is the wish of society.

THE two first men who united themselves made, by a secret pact, a sacrifice of a portion of their liberty; one of them, though the strongest, promised the other, not to stand between him and the sun, not to throw into the sea the prey they took in hunting, even when there was too much of it; not to hinder the other from eating, when he himself had eat enough, even though the smell of the meat was disagreeable to him; the other, the weakest, promised to pick up the game, to cook it, to keep their hut in order, &c.

THIS code, simple at first, became more complex as the number of men encreased; but the general principle of their union remained always the same; and the science of the law consists in fixing the degrees where individual liberty hurts the public order.

Now of all liberties, the most dangerous, and that whereof the benefit to the individual bears no proportion to the general damage, is the liberty of
selling

selling corn to foreigners when the community runs a risk of wanting it. A mere agent for a few foreign merchants, will send abroad in a little time several millions worth of corn; a small commission, will be his recompence; an agitation in the prices, trouble in the community, a general disorder, will perhaps be the consequence of it; and a respect for the will of one, shall produce the misfortune of all *.

WHAT a wild constitution would it be, which would tolerate such an excess? Such unbounded liberty would be a real tyranny.

BUT to what strange conclusions doth not the abuse of terms lead us; thus, under the name of liberty, we might just as well permit the strong man to better his fortune at the expence of a weak one. Do not mistake, this illustration is more just than you are aware

* We treat here only of liberty and of the rights of commerce, having already discussed those of the proprietors.

of; the strong man in society is the proprietor, the weak, the man without property.

A LITTLE attention will shew us, that the greatest part of the prohibitory laws which are attacked in the name of liberty, are almost always the safeguards of the poor against the rich, and so it must naturally be.

THE more a man abounds in faculties, of what kind soever, the more he desires to use them without obstruction; but the more any man is deprived of them, the more expedient for him it is, that the power of others should be tempered by equitable laws. Such are those which oppose the constant liberty of exporting corn; they may prescribe bounds indeed to the will of the rich man, and to his prerogatives as a proprietor; but they protect the poor, the men who live by their labour, by preventing the scarcity of the necessaries of life, and hindering, as much as possible, variations in the price, of which *they* are always the victims.

WHAT

WHAT power upon the minds of men would not these reasonable considerations have, if they could strike the memory, with one of those general words, to which men seem to have sworn fealty and homage? such as liberty and property; the truths which can be annexed to *them*, will always have a great advantage over those which have need to be explained, however interesting they may be to humanity.

THE indefinite love of liberty in political oeconomy, and the excessive hatred to prohibitions, goes back to man's infancy. Born in weakness, brought up in obedience, struck with the long view of his servitude, able to do nothing without the will of another, the name of *liberty* must enchant his first thoughts, and that of prohibition seem to him the clank of his chains. Hurried into the world, he must there retain the same impressions, so long as his situation and his reflections do not carry him beyond himself. It is not till very late, and after

reflecting on society, and the different relations of it, that he perceives there are some kinds of liberty, behind which is placed the slavery of the multitude; and prohibitions, which only serve to preserve to them the exercise of their faculties and their powers; but our mind by that time is formed by habit, and these general words which have so often made us happy or unhappy, still controul our opinion, and command our suffrages.



OBJECTION.

BUT it is said again, Liberty is the soul of commerce; you must respect even the abuse of it, or expect to see that commerce languish, which is the source of all your riches.

LIBERTY is almost always favourable to commerce, because most exchanges
being

being useful or indifferent to the community, to submit them to laws, would be to endeavour to supply by the apathick view of administration, the active and zealous inspection of personal interest; it would be pretending to trace out to the merchants, the road which they would readily find themselves, and the choice of which depending on a number of combinations, could never belong to the legislator; he ought to put fences on the brink of known precipices, but after that to leave every one to walk as he pleases in the common path.

IT is of no importance to the community, that the proprietors of money occasion some transient alteration in the prices of merchandises of luxury and of conveniency. They are so many children playing with their rattles, let them play on; this alteration within the kingdom interests only the rich, and affects only superfluous enjoyments.

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THE interest of the merchants will accord in like manner with the interest of the community, in most of the exchanges which they make with foreigners; if they buy cheap at home, they will neglect nothing to sell dear abroad; if they try to sell dear at home, they will have used the same endeavours before to buy cheap in other countries; but the same interest will lead them in like wise, to introduce into France several productions of foreign industry; the same interest will carry them to collect the corn in a province in France, and to sell it for a million and one hundred livres to the neighbouring nations, rather than for a million to the inhabitants of another part of the kingdom: this conduct in them may be contrary to manufactures, to population, to the public order; then such kinds of commerce will be very hurtful, and if liberty is the soul of it, why then, *that* liberty is an evil.

It is thus that there is nothing complete, nothing absolute in the greatest part of principles; liberty, property, commerce, high prices, money, agriculture, and many other cant party words, to which men would subject all economical combinations, have all equally need of being confined within due limits. Good and bad, true and false, depend on the degree of prudence or of exaggeration attending notions; and as one term can never express these modifications and shades, whenever a man sets himself up to defend an exclusive word or principle, he runs a great risk of deceiving himself, and of overshooting the mark. We should leave this manner of proceeding, to such men as having a desire and a semblance of greatness, without having the abilities, would, without fatiguing themselves, hold the reins of the world in their hands.

C H A P. XXVIII.

*Would a permanent Law forbidding the
Exportation of Corn, be expedient?*

WE have hitherto examined the inconveniences attending the constant liberty of exporting corn; we proceed now to consider if a continual prohibition of it would be a wise law.

If corn could be preserved without great care and great expences, there would be but little inconvenience in letting that commodity be laid up in a country, as they lay up money; it would be as certain a wealth, and this plenty would always bring on, sooner or later, a proportionable population, and an encrease of labour, and of objects of exchange for proprietors; but corn spoils pretty soon; thus to stop its exportation, when there is any evident superfluity, over and above a prudent provision for the next year, is to hinder

a perishable commodity from being converted into a durable commodity, that is, into money.

BESIDES, a great super-abundance would lower the price sensibly, and if the proprietors could not indemnify themselves against this fall of price, by the sale of this superfluity, they would sustain a great loss.

A QUANTITY of surplus, in the hands of the proprietors, diminishes the strength of their pretensions, as the taking away this surplus augments it; but it is not in the same proportion, because the fear of wanting the necessary, acts much more forcibly on the consumers, than the incumbrance of a surplus on the proprietors.

Thus let us suppose, that four millions of septiers of corn was the surplus necessary in the kingdom of France to maintain the reasonable price of twenty-four livres; if the fourth of this surplus was taken away, the price might rise to six and thirty livres; whilst an en-crease

crease of the same quantity would possibly make it fall only to twenty.

HOWEVER that may be, the excess of surplus and the fall of price, which is the consequence of it, should be prevented as much as possible; for the amount of the imposts, and the price of workmanship, not proportioning themselves immediately to this variation, the proprietors sustain a diminution of their income; and if this circumstance discourages for a time cultivation, a scarcity may follow plenty; and extraordinary agitations in the prices result from it.

WE have shewn that the same fluctuations would be the effect of the constant liberty of exporting corn; but these two propositions will not appear a contradiction to any but those who never observe in any discussion, never distinguish more than two systems, absolutely and wholly contrary to each other; nothing is more commodious, and nothing weds you more to that which you have chosen, because

because you make use in defence of that, of all the defects you spy in the other; but to pretend to prove that the constant liberty of exporting corn, is the best system, by shewing that the constant prohibition has the same inconveniences, is to undertake to prove that white is the most agreeable of all colours, because black is the most melancholy.

NOTHING proclaims more the infancy of our ideas than this manner of arguing. Men would naturally at first separate all truths in their contemplations by striking boundaries; but in proportion as their understanding improved, as it became more penetrating and more flexible, the objects of their observation multiplied, and their aptitude to distinguish them augmented; then they remarked great differences where before they had perceived nothing but uniformity; and relations where they had only seen contrasts; and it is in order to express these new discoveries,

and not to favour weakness, that modifications in expressions have been introduced.

It is thus that in the question concerning corn, for a long time only the absolute liberty or the absolute restraint was discussed. It is now time to seek, between the two extremes, for some reasonable modifications; but as those which may be chosen, may be applicable to the commerce of corn in general, it seems proper first to examine the question of the interior liberty, and that shall be the object of the second part of this book.

End of the First Part.

PART II.

On the Commerce of Corn with-
in the Kingdom.

CHAP. I.

Advantages and Inconveniences of absolute Liberty in the Home Commerce of Corn.

ONE province has a superfluity ; in another there is a scarcity : nothing is more conformable to justice and to the principles of society, than to permit these two provinces to assist each other mutually ; the one, by receiving a succour which is necessary to it, the other, by exchanging a surplus which is useless to it, against the goods of which it is destitute. The natural
P agents

agents in these exchanges are the merchants, because they make them their continual study, because they have capitals at liberty to execute them with expedition, and that by means of this money and of their speedy intelligence, they soon establish such a level as the nature of this commerce will allow.

BUT the merchant has two qualities ; in one, he is the useful agent we speak of ; in the other, he is only the proprietor of money or of credit, who seeks to make a profit of these advantages, in whatever manner he can.

WHEN there is a great difference in the prices of corn in different parts of the kingdom, the merchant begins by securing this advantage to himself, by transporting from the abounding to the wanting province ; but when the level is settled, or when the disproportions are not sufficient to excite his speculations, he still would do something, and keep turning his capital, in order to augment it ; then he buys, to sell with profit

profit at some future time, either in the same place or elsewhere.

IF he makes these purchases with moderation, and when prices are low, he is still useful. For if he speculates at the end of autumn, the time of the greatest plenty, to sell again about the middle of spring, when there is commonly a rise of price, he prevents too great an inequality in the prices of the year; as he keeps them up, at the beginning, by his purchases, and keeps them down, at the end, by his sales.

LASTLY, if he buys in a very plentiful year, with a design to keep it to the next, he still does service to the community; as he prevents too sensible a fall, and makes his capital serve to keep this valuable commodity in the kingdom.

MERCHANTS then are useful when they transport corn from one place to another, and also when they buy to sell again even at the same place; provided they only make their purchases

at the period or in the years when prices are low.

BUT as the general interest is never protected against personal interest, but by the laws, the merchants left at perfect liberty, would not confine themselves to the speculations whose utility we have now pointed out; but even when the price of corn should be at a reasonable rate, such, in short, as that a rise would be hurtful to the general harmony, they would buy nevertheless, and the prices would become dearer.

WHY so, say they, as long as exportation is not allowed, how could the intervention of the merchants raise the prices? Will this intervention diminish the quantity of corn, or will it increase the need of it?

CERTAINLY not. Whilst the exportation is not allowed, the quantity of corn dispersed through the kingdom is not diminished, whether that corn remains in the hands of the proprietors and farmers, or whether it passes into those

those of the merchants; but the greater the number of successive agents is, who intervene between the proprietors and the consumers, the more the price rises upon the latter, since the price is necessarily augmented by so much as the whole profit amounts to, which these agents may make.

THE amount of these profits will depend on the ability of the speculators, the more or less general scarcity of corn, the greater or lesser rapidity of the competition, the power of the spirit of imitation; all these circumstances are too vague and too uncertain to be reduced to figures; but to avoid all dispute, I confine myself on this head to one simple proposition, that is, that when corn is come to a reasonable price, the intervention of merchants, as mere speculators, is always hurtful and dangerous, whatever may be the rise occasioned by their gains.

I WILL however observe further, that the more the speculators are persuaded

of the scarcity of corn, the more bold they may be in their enterprizes; because by making themselves masters of a commodity of absolute necessity, their strength augments with the scarcity; and often the mere alarm which their purchases inspires, produces the rise which they desire.

SUCH operations on the part of the merchants, are of very bad consequence, as they raise the prices for their sole interest, at the risk of troubling the public order, and to the great detriment of the people, who always suffer, as we have shewn, from rises and revolutions in the prices.

BUT it is not barely in proportion to their natural profits, that the merchants raise the price of corn; their intervention in this commerce heightens the prices likewise, by more essential considerations, which I proceed to unfold.

CHAP. II.

Influence of the Intervention of Merchants on Opinion, and of Opinion on Price.

IT would be infinitely difficult for the government of France, to come at the knowledge of the quantity of corn which exists in the kingdom, and the extent of the needs. This calculation would be impossible for individuals; the sellers and buyers do not undertake it, nor even think of it.

IT is then only through the effect of a public opinion, vague and undeterminate, that the people are uneasy or quiet about the provision of corn dispersed through the kingdom; and this opinion, springs from imagination as much as from reason.

LET some merchants ingross the corn dispersed in different places, and bring it together into one, the quantity existing seems diminished, the fear of

wanting it, augments; a few reports spread, a few sham buyers who seem very earnest, and many other means, may excite uneasiness, and produce revolutions in the prices, which the spirit of imitation fortifies.

SUCH emotions are well known in all branches of commerce, and especially in those of great extent; for it is then impossible to follow the relations between the needs and the quantities, between the interest of the sellers and that of the buyers. Such is the corn-trade, such is dealing in the public funds; it is in such commerces that the imagination has most hold; its empire encreases in obscurity; mens opinions are guided by that, whenever reason is not sufficient to direct them; and as the habitude of treating with men, acquaints us with its power, and teaches how to make use of it, merchants must necessarily be able to spread hope or fear with more facility than the country people; and in this point of view,
their

their intervention between the proprietors of corn and the consumers, becomes, in various circumstances, a fresh means of raising the price of it.

C H A P. III.

The Intervention of Merchants makes Corn dearer, by diminishing the Number of Sellers whom the Consumers have to deal with. The false Idea entertained of Competition.

THE price depends not only on the quantity of the thing to be sold, but also on the number of sellers; that is, if the quantity is equal, the price will keep higher, if the goods are divided among few sellers, than if they are in the hands of a great number: this is an obvious truth; the fewer sellers there are, the more easily they can come to an understanding together, and form a league against the buyers.

Now the intervention of merchants in the commerce of corn diminishes the number

number of sellers with whom the consumers have to deal.

THIS proposition will perhaps appear extraordinary; for the partisans of unlimited liberty form a quite different reasoning. The more liberty there is, say they, the more merchants there are; the more merchants there are, the more competition there is; the more competition there is, the more any excess in the prices is prevented.

LET us examine which of these two propositions is the most just.

IF the intervention of merchants diminishes the number of sellers whom the consumers have to deal with, that intervention will certainly diminish the competition which is favourable to the latter. Now it is clear that such is the infallible effect of the intervention of merchants in this commerce.

LET us endeavour to render this truth sensible.

WITHOUT the intervention of merchants, the number of persons who
would

would sell corn to the consumers, would be the same as the number of proprietors and farmers, and each of them would sell annually only a quantity equal to his income.

BUT merchants do not operate with their incomes, but with their capitals, often more than doubled by their credit: thus when they intervene in the commerce of corn, each of them, according to his strength, stands in the place of a considerable number of proprietors; and then one merchant becomes the sole vender (with respect to the body of consumers) of a quantity of corn, which, but for his intervention, would perhaps have been offered to sale by two or three hundred proprietors.

LET us suppose then, that this merchant proposes to deal in corn for a million, partly with his capital, partly by help of his credit; this million will enable him to buy, perhaps, the income in corn, of an extent of lands worth twenty or thirty millions of capital,

tal, and which we may very well suppose to be divided among four or five hundred proprietors or farmers: thus the intervention of merchants doth necessarily diminish the competition favourable to the consumers, since it diminishes the number of sellers whom the consumers have to deal with.

WHY then is a quite contrary effect falsely imputed to the intervention of merchants? Why is it thought by exciting this, to foment a competition useful to the consumers? I cannot comprehend it, nor can I attribute it to any thing but to an ambiguity easily fallen into on such abstract matters. It appears in general, that the more agents intervene in the commerce of corn, the more sales there will be, and consequently the more sellers. This proposition is very just; for first there will be the proprietors or farmers, who will sell to the merchants; then the merchants, who will sell to the corn chandlers; then the corn chandlers, who will retail it to the consumers;

consumers ; and all these operations will augment the number of sales and of sellers in the community.

BUT what good do the *consumers* get by the number of sellers who have preceded those whom *they* have to deal with ? This number must have heightened the price of the commodity by all the profits gained by these successive agents. The only thing which interests the consumers, is, that the number of persons whom they have to deal with be considerable, in order to avail themselves of their competition. Now it is precisely the number of *these* sellers which is diminished by the intervention of merchants, as we have demonstrated.

WHAT does it signify to the inhabitants of Paris that the corn brought to the corn-market there has been sold and resold ten times over in Beauce, in Picardy, and in the isle of France ! This succession of agents heightens the price, and hurts the Parisians ; but what would be of use to them, would be, that at the instant

instant they are going to deal for this corn, the quantity should be divided among a great number of sellers, that the price might be lowered by their competition.

LET us resume the reasoning incessantly used on this subject, to shew the illusion of it.

THE more liberty there is, the more merchants there are,—Yes.

THE more merchants there are, the more sales and sellers there are,—Yes.

THE more sellers there are, the more there ensues a competition favourable to the consumers,—No.

FOR it is only that part of the sales and sellers which is hurtful to the consumers, which is augmented by this great liberty; but the number of sellers favourable by their competition to the interest of the consumers, is really diminished by the intervention of merchants.

SHOULD it be said, that as merchants cannot be prohibited from intervening
between

between the proprietors and the consumers, it is to be wished that there may be a great many of them, that at the instant when these merchants shall want to sell, their competition may be favourable to the consumers.

THIS proposition is true with regard to the corn, and to all other merchandises which come from abroad; because as foreign merchandises cannot be brought into, and sold in, France but by merchants, the more there are of them, the more their competition is favourable to the buyers.

THIS proposition is still true, with regard to the national corn transported from one province to another; because this corn transported into a province which did not produce it, is, as to that province, foreign corn; that is to say, that without the help of merchants that corn would not have been carried thither: then the more that quantity of corn is divided between a great number

ber of sellers, the more there will result from it a competition favourable to the consumers. But whenever the merchants intervene in the commerce of corn, either to sell it again in the same place, or to carry to a neighbouring town, as the proprietors or their farmers would have done without them; it is certain that every merchant diminishes the competition favourable to the buyers, since every one of these merchants stands, in all probability, in the place of several proprietors.

IN such a commerce, the multitude of merchants is useful only to the proprietors. Because with regard to these proprietors or their farmers, the merchants are only buyers, so their competition is of use to those who want to sell. But in this case this competition again thwarts the interest of the consumers; for the more the merchants, by their number and their rivalry, have raised the price of corn in the hands of the proprietors, the more they
must

must ask of the consumers when they sell it again to them..

It appears by these various distinctions, which it is difficult to render sensible, and which yet are of infinite importance, to what a degree economical truths have need to be studied with precision. Some men would make them the science of generalities; and yet, if I may so speak, it is rather the art of equilibrium. In the greatest part of the propositions, the advantage and the inconvenience, the use and the abuse, are intermingled, or they touch one another; we must seek incessantly the line which separates them.

C H A P. IV.

The Intervention of Merchants contributes to heighten Prices, by augmenting the natural Power of the Sellers of Corn over the Consumers.

THE relations between the need of selling and the need of buying, are one of the principal circumstances which compose the price of all merchandises. These two needs are very unequal when corn is the subject, as we have had occasion to unfold. But the natural inequality of power between the sellers and the consumers is greatly augmented when the merchants stand in the place of the proprietors or the farmers, and make themselves masters of the corn.

To explain the motive of this, it is proper to shew the several gradations, whereby the empire of the sellers of corn augments or diminishes.

IN a society, wherein goods of all kinds should not yet be accumulated by
the

the effect of time, or of an active industry, the proprietor of the necessaries of life could not satisfy his fancy, but by maintaining workmen who should work for him; then the distribution, or the sale of subsistence, would be closely connected with the desire of enjoying, and would become a necessary condition to it.

BUT when in the same society there hath been amassed not only a thousand objects of luxury and of conveniency, but likewise an immense sum of coined metals, wherewith all those goods may be acquired, it results from thence, that when a proprietor of corn is at the same time a proprietor of money, he may satisfy a great part of his desires, without being obliged to sell the subsistence whereof he is master; and it is thus that the wealth of the farmers contributes to keep up the price of corn.

HOWEVER as the greatest part of these farmers, as well as of the great

and little proprietors, do not lay up wealth, and that even those who are reckoned *rich* have, in general, only a moderate or transitory saving; when by the intervention of merchants, the corn passes into the hands of that part of the nation which disposes of the greatest quantity of money, and which joins to this wealth an ideal value equivalent in power, called *Credit*; there springs up at once, with respect to the consumers, a species of contractors who have a new, and till then unheard of, strength. These will not sell, as the proprietors or the farmers, to spend or to pay imposts, in as much as the corn in the merchants magazines is now no longer an income, but a capital which they can keep like their money, or like any other merchandise, as long as their interest, or their well or ill digested speculation, induces them to do it.

LET us conclude from the observations in this and the foregoing chapters, that

that the intervention of merchants necessarily heightens the price of corn; in the first place, in proportion to the fair profit which every agent of commerce is intitled to; and then because this intervention affects opinion, diminishes the competition which is of use to the consumers, and augments the natural power of the sellers of corn over these consumers.

CHAP. V.

What Abuse the Merchants may make of their Strength, in the internal Commerce of Corn.

IT may be said, perhaps, that the corn merchants will never make an ill use, to any great degree, of this internal liberty: besides, as they are useful, as we admit, in transporting corn from one place to another, or in buying it when cheap in order to keep it, we must take the advantage with the

inconvenience, and the use with the abuse.

WE shall observe in the first place, that the abuse should never be taken with the advantage, but only so far as the one cannot be separated from the other.

WE shall examine at the end of this work, whether this separation is possible in the commerce of corn; and we shall here confine ourselves to make it appear, that the abuses, whereof the internal liberty is susceptible, may extend very far.

THIS opinion is commonly contradicted by maintaining, that speculations can never have a great influence on prices; the mass of corn which circulates in the kingdom being an immense object, in which the strength of the merchants is lost or becomes insensible.

I AGREE, indeed, that immediately after a common harvest there is upwards of a thousand millions worth of

corn in France *, and that at that time the manœuvres of the merchants left to the greatest liberty, could influence opinion but very slightly, for the means of the speculators are not proportioned to the total of the corn amassed in the barns and the granaries; but the whole varies in this respect, as by degrees the consumption hath diminished the provision; and towards the end of the year, the corn necessary for the subsistence of all the inhabitants of the kingdom, is no more than a small object when compared to the two thousand millions of cash circulating in France, and to the extent of the credit which

* We have computed that there must be two septiers a head, and that there are 24,000,000 of men in France; thus there must be 48,000,000 of septiers for the annual provision of France, which at only twenty livres the septier (making allowance for the great quantity of corn of an inferior quality which comes into this mass) make 960,000,000; to which adding the value of the corn remaining of the preceeding year, it appears there is more than a thousand millions worth of corn at harvest time, without reckoning the quantity allotted for seed.

further augments the means of the speculators. The subsistence in corn necessary for 500,000 men for fifteen days is worth only a million †. Now how many millions are there not in the power of the men in trade or in the finances! This is not all; the facility of exchanges is so multiplied by habitude and the spirit of interest, that such an ingrossment might be made, without diverting their capitals from any other employment.

LET a man only have credit enough to obtain a hundred thousand livres on his security; let him then distribute this sum, in the way of earnest, among the proprietors of corn, he may make himself master during some time of ten fold the value of it in corn.

† At the rate of two septiers a head per annum, there must be the twelfth part of a septier every fifteen days; which twelfth, is worth 40 sou's, at the rate of 24 livres the septier; this makes, for 500,000 men, a million; and this sum laid out in worse corn, such as the poor country folks live on, would represent the food of more than 600,000 persons during that period.

IN

• IN fine, it must not be forgotten, that, in certain circumstances, the ingrossing of corn participates momentarily of the inconveniences of exportation, by concealing that precious surplus which moderates the power of the sellers over the consumers, and calms the uneasiness of the latter by the eagerness of the former.

FROM these several observations every one will easily perceive both what may be done in the corn trade, with moderate means, and the extent of these means in France, and the prodigious influence which buying up must have when last year's corn is almost gone, or in a scarce year: the strength of the proprietor of corn is so great against him who stands in need of it to preserve his life, that it is difficult to form a just idea of the abuses which might arise from an unlimited liberty within the kingdom itself, were even the exportation prohibited.

SHOULD

SHOULD the inconveniences attending such a liberty not be felt in almost any country in Europe, it is natural it should be so. Some of them are not one tenth so populous as France, in proportion to their extent; others have very little money, and the few merchants who have the disposal of it, would not dare to ingross the corn in a time of scarcity; for in all countries where the people are essentially soldiers, arbitrary governments would never intrust their subsistence for one instant to the chance of mercantile speculations. There are then countries where laws have never been made to restrain the commerce of corn, because no body has ever attempted to make a bad use of it, or if any one has done it, authority has immediately checked him.

THE kingdom in Europe which bears the greatest relation to France in point of commerce and industry is England; we have already had occasion to mention

tion it, and we shall treat separately on their laws concerning corn.

HOLLAND likewise is often quoted, because in proportion to its extent it is the richest country in Europe, the most populous, and that where the traffic of corn has the greatest liberty. But admitting all this, I see at the same time, a very small country surrounded by the sea, and cut with canals, which render communication extremely easy; a country which contains only a million of inhabitants, and where the low rate of interest draws the corn of Poland and the North, as pledges, and on their passage to other places; I see, in fine, a state where the spirit of commerce and interest, diffused among all, has introduced in their markets the art of defence, together with that of attack; where the republican constitution gives strength to the people, a strength augmented too by a general disposition to oeconomy, which renders provisions of corn and little hoards of money more common.

common. Lastly, I see a national character, cold, grave, and circumspect, which neither receives nor communicates any but slow and measured impressions.

I CAN easily conceive that amidst such circumstances the liberty of the commerce of corn is attended with no inconvenience.

BUT cast an eye on France, you see 24 millions of men (the greatest part of which live on nothing but bread) spread over a country of great depth, bounded in part only by the sea, where the internal communications are as yet imperfectly facilitated, where a thousand different productions are required from the earth, where two thousand millions (almost half the cash of Europe) are circulating, and where at the same time a great facility of credit prevails; a country, in fine, where all impressions are great and rapid, because the distinguishing character of the nation is that sensibility in the present instant, which

which is opposite to foresight of the future, that mildness and flexibility of manners which produce the spirit of imitation, and that vivacity of mind which leads to exaggeration.

It is evident how much such a nation, in such a country, differs from all others, and how natural it is that an unlimited liberty of speculating on subsistence, should be more susceptible of inconvenience and abuse, there, than any where else.

THIS is always experienced in indifferent crops, or when little old corn is left. I will say more; even in the most favourable years, the unlimited liberty permitted by law could never subsist but in an abstract manner, that is to say, only whilst opinion combating against it, should prevent its being made use of to the degree self-interest would wish it. Without this salutary curb, we should soon feel how dangerous it is to excite all men to trade in corn; we should see what extraordinary alterations

8 in

in prices would be the effect of this unlimited liberty, if men could give themselves up to it with confidence; if all the rich and active men in all France could quietly obey their thirst of gain, without fearing either the public contempt, or popular commotions, or the weakness of the law when called in to defend the interest of one against the interest of all.

BUT in vain would law encourage a traffic on which opinion throws contempt. There would never then be but one class of men who would follow it; for the public opinion is more strong and more enlightened than the law; it is stronger, because it is present every where, because it exercises its empire in company, and even in the bosom of families; it is more enlightened, because the law may be the work of one man who may err, but opinion is the result of the thoughts of nations and of ages. This superiority of public opinion, is especially sensible in a monarchical government,

vernment, because the members of the community having there no share in making the laws, they carry all their strength towards opinion; this they make the representative of their wishes, and of their thoughts; and they erect a tribunal to it, which all are constrained to respect, though it has neither soldier nor peace officer; because it disposes as a sovereign of the two great springs of civilized society, esteem and contempt.

AND let no man imagine that the popular hatred against those who, in certain circumstances, carry on the commerce of corn, is a vague and inconsiderate sentiment: in all times, the name of *monopolist* has been given to those who made an ill use of liberty in this kind of traffick. I know it is said now-a-days that monopoly means nothing, that no such thing exists, nay, that it cannot exist; because *monopoly* comes from a Greek word, which signifies *sole seller*, and that there never can be one in such an extensive commerce as that of corn.

WELL,

WELL, then, *monopolist* comes from a Greek word which signifies *sole seller*, and *monologist*, which signifies *sole talker*, comes from another; but there are monologists and monopolists, not that there ever is but one talker or one merchant in the world, but because there is but one in such a place, at such a time: the etymology of a word is not enough to destroy the idea men have annexed to it, because they have extended it beyond, or turned it aside from, its original signification.

I SHALL then only justify the popular sentiment; the name of monopolist is almost never pronounced in times of plenty, and when corn is at a low price, though there are perhaps at that time more speculators in that article than in times of scarcity. The people, contented with buying bread at a moderate price, do not trouble their heads about the rise which the intervention of the merchants may have produced: but when indifferent crops raise the price of

CORN

corn already, all the speculations which tend to raise it still more, strike the minds of the people, and excite their indignation. They then give those schemes the name of monopoly, and cannot look without hatred on those men who make use of their foresight, of their money, and of their skill, to make the burthen, occasioned by circumstances, still more heavy upon them.

IF the air had been susceptible of an unequal partition, as substance is, those men would, no doubt, have been greatly esteemed, who by tubes or conductors skilfully composed, should have found the means to make that air pass expeditiously to the places which should have wanted it; but those would have been looked on as the scourges of society, who by the invention and use of some air pumps, should have rarified the air in one place to condense it in another, and who should thus have troubled the general happiness, for their own interest or their sole convenience.

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THE application here is obvious; and it is for the rulers of the people to distinguish these two classes of men, who are indiscriminately called merchants; the one, useful subjects, transport corn from a place of abundance to a place of scarcity; the others, dangerous speculators, heap up and keep this commodity to make a gain of the dearness, which they themselves had kept up, and perhaps excited.

IT is this kind of operations that the laws should endeavour to prevent, when corn is come to a reasonable price; and it is against this monopoly that the people never fail to exclaim.

THIS indignation, once excited by speculations contrary to the national interest, is perpetuated in the public opinion: from a reasonable sentiment springs afterwards an unjust one, such as that which throws an opprobrium on the commerce of corn in general, whereas this commerce is often useful to the community; but how can we
4 expect,

expect, from passions and from prejudices, a distinction which often escapes the calm meditation of such men as are most capable of thought and reflection? There should be established, not in the theory, but in the practice of the commerce of corn, a sensible boundary line, between liberty and the abuse of it. Without such a precaution, this commerce will never receive its laws but from the public opinion, and this opinion will confound what should be distinguished; for its power, so often salutary, has also sometimes its inconveniences. It is seldom moderate in its decrees; it rarely stops where it should stop; the impulsion of which it has need, to become a power, and to resist obstacles, carries it almost always beyond the mark. Its vehemence is requisite to support it, and its exaggeration to proclaim it; but then its effects exceed its design; it would only attack avarice, it throws a ridicule on oeconomy; it would only honour frank-

ness, it renders circumspection suspected; it would only blast cowardice, it throws a shade on prudence; it would only vilify monopoly, it sheds contempt on commerce. One would be tempted to say, that this public opinion cannot act upon the manners, but by its excess; and that it is like those North winds which purify the air, only by their impetuosity and violence.

C H A P. VI.

On the Arguments drawn from antient Facts.

IN that succession of absolute and contradictory laws, given during some centuries on the commerce of corn, how shall we draw from experience any certain arguments? Each party may, with ease, collect anecdotes suitable to the system they support, or contrary at least to that which they attack, inasmuch as the intire liberty, and the absolute

absolute restraint must, one and the other, have produced abuses and inconveniences. It is true, there is a manner of representing these facts, which makes them all favourable to the opinion they have chosen. I have seen several examples of this, both in books and in conversation; and this manner is whimsical enough to have a few words said of it here.

Does a man resolve to defend the absolute liberty? Would he, by the recapitulation of facts, prove that it never is the cause of the rise of price? Thus he reasons.

If the abuse of liberty, and the high prices of corn, have called for the intervention of government, or given birth to prohibitory laws, the partisan of liberty converts this circumstance to his favour, and says,

In such a year, the æra of the prohibition, corn was at an excessive price.

If the restraint, after a long continuance, makes the prices fall, and occa-

sions the re-establishment of the laws in favour of liberty, he follows the same method, and says,

SUCH a year, the æra of liberty, corn was at a low price, and plenty reigned every where.

IT is easy to see how very defective this way of reasoning is; for you may in the same manner prove that all febrifuges give the fever.

SUCH a day, say you, Mr. What do you call him took the bark, and that very day his fever was at the worst.

SUCH another day, he left it off, and he began to mend.

IN general every one will easily see,

THAT scarcities and dearness have brought on prohibitions.

THAT abundance and low prices have given occasion for the liberty of exportation.

BUT the prohibitions required to moderate the prices, or the liberty granted in order to raise them, could not be able, all at once, to change these circumstances.

cumstances. It is not surprizing, then, that prohibition and dearneſs, liberty and low price, may be often found together.

BUT from hence to ſay, the prohibition produced the ſcarcity and dearneſs; the liberty produced the abundance and the low price; this is evidently reverſing the order of the things; it is giving, at leaſt, for proof of a ſyſtem, a concurrence of circumſtances which ſignifies nothing.

WHAT do they ſtill further? They form a table of the prices in different parts of the kingdom and at different times of the year; on this foundation they eſtabliſh an average price, and they compare it with another average price at a more remote period: but who can with ſufficient accuracy follow up ſuch a calculation? The reſult of it, beſides, could not become a ſufficient authority till after the diſcuſſion of an infinity of relations; at leaſt we muſt be certain, whether the years compared were equal

as to the produce of the crops, as to population, as to domestic tranquillity, and as to many other considerations.

BUT in fine, I suppose that they had all these *data*, the reasoning drawn from an average price would not answer all objections; for what is one of the greatest inconveniences of the unlimited liberty at home and abroad? It is that it raises the prices by the intervention of greedy or inconsiderate speculators, and most frequently likewise in an unequal manner, according to the quantity of money which happens to be in such or such a place, according to the cleverness of the men who have the disposal of it, according to the situation of the province where the speculation is made, according to the extent of population, and many other combinations.

Now these unequal rises are easily concealed under the veil of an average price; because if some operations have made the price at *Rouen* rise to fifty
livres,

livres, they take at the same time a price in the mountains of the *Gevaudan*, where it is twenty livres; then, fifty and twenty make seventy, average price, thirty-five livres. Yet notwithstanding this moderate price, the manufactories in Normandy did not suffer the less, the people there did not rise the less, want did not the less destroy several families there; indeed, indeed, these calculations are too uncomplete, and rest on too uncertain foundations, to stop our attention for any length of time.

IN fine, as the greatest liberty is almost always attended with some limitation, or some exception, they never fail to ascribe to these circumstances all the effects of the liberty with which they are not content. Thus, in the law of 1764, it was not the free exportation that made the price rise beyond measure, but the prohibition to export when it should be thirty livres. Another time, it was a regulation of the police, which, by excepting one town
from

from the full liberty, deranged all the combinations. Elsewhere, it was a toll at market, or on the road. Another time, the constant moderation of prices was going to be established, when the law was altered; in a word, they add, that in order to know the excellent effects of a general liberty, domestic and foreign, it should be tried for ten years running. Sure enough, on this condition, they run no risk *now*, in singing its praises; for unless the population of France diminishes, such a law cannot ever continue so long, when even they should commit the fault of suffering too great a surplus to accumulate, as was the case before 1764.

It is thus that by the art of sophistry, they render the dim light of ancient facts still more obscure. Far be it from me however, to dissuade the study of them; but in matters exceedingly abstract and complicated, where one effect participates of a multitude of causes, this study, unless joined to a thorough knowledge

knowledge of principles, is only one means the more of going astray.

THERE is still an important observation which renders all the conclusions very problematical, which are drawn from ancient facts, relating to the circulation of corn; it is, that we can never know them but very imperfectly.

WHAT do we, indeed, to attain to this knowledge?

WE follow the prices in some registers of the police, and we read the edicts which are transmitted down to us; but who can insure us that these edicts may not have been tempered, or almost annulled, by particular orders of government, the tradition of which would naturally not reach us.

Is it not known that restraints have been often experienced, during the law of liberty, and tolerations under the law of prohibition? Have we not seen, in our own days, several provinces never observe the law of 1770, whilst others conformed to it exactly? Do we not
see,

see, even at present, regulations of precaution and statutes of police peculiar to several great towns? In fine, the communication by sea from the north to the south of France, the only one practicable, is it not forbidden? How many other exceptions of the utmost consequence, are always unknown to posterity? How then can we, on some remote facts, build a system worthy of confidence!

If we are witnesses that our great grandchildren will be exposed to the danger of forming reasonings on very uncertain foundations, such also may ours be, when we found them solely on the edicts which time has transmitted to us *.

* This second part is much shorter than the former; its subject is less extensive; and besides, all the general principles which apply to one and the other, were necessarily placed in that which was first handled.

End of the Second Part.

PART III.

**Examination of the several known
Modifications, applicable to the
Commerce of Corn.**

CHAPTER I.

*On the Modifications relative to the Com-
merce of Corn in general.*

WE have endeavoured to shew in the first part of this work, that the constant liberty, or the constant prohibition of exporting corn, were laws contrary to the public good.

IN the second, we have shewn that the unlimited liberty of the commerce of corn within the kingdom, was attended with advantages and inconveniences.

IT

It would seem then, that any *absolute* law, either for or against the liberty, is repugnant to the good of the state.

BUT is there any modification, so constantly suitable; as that it may be ordained by a perpetual law? Or if no law can be sufficiently pliable to fulfil the conditions required for the public good; must it be changed every year? In a word; can a system free from inconveniences be established? Or must we be content to shun great faults? This shall be the object of our researches.

THERE are some modifications applicable to the commerce of corn within the kingdom: there are others which only concern that commerce with foreign countries.

ALL these modifications may arise from the various limits imposed on liberty. We proceed to run quickly over the advantages and the inconveniences of the most known precautions.

THE

THE intervention of government, or of the intendants of the provinces in its name, may also be considered as a modification more or less contrary to the liberty of the commerce of corn, and under this aspect, it is proper for us to examine it likewise.

C H A P. II.

On the known Modifications, relative to the Exportation of Corn.

THE most known modifications, applicable to the exportation of corn, are all relative to the quantities, to the prices, to the times, or to the places.

THE quantity of corn which it shall be lawful to export every year, may be prescribed.

It may be ordained that there shall be no exportation but under a certain price, during certain months, or from certain provinces.

OR

OR the exportation may be modified by laying on an impost.

WE proceed to see if these various conditions would obviate the inconveniences against which the state should guard itself.

C H A P. III.

On fixing a Price for the Exportation of Corn.

WE have seen that the free exportation of corn may be hurtful to the community, either by occasioning a real deficiency, or by depriving the kingdom of that surplus, which it is absolutely necessary for it to have.

THE law of 1764 thought to put a stop to the abuse of exportation, by prohibiting it when the price should rise to thirty livres the septier.

IT was presumed, without doubt, that it might be contrary to the general interest that the price should rise higher.

I SHALL

I SHALL not stop, at present, to discuss whether even this price was not too disproportionate to the usual price of workmanship, and whether it was expedient thus to augment rapidly the momentary benefit of the proprietors of land, at the expence of the ease of the people, and perhaps at the risk of prejudicing the manufactories. Such a discussion does not here come within my subject; but I must shew that the very design of preventing the price of corn in France from exceeding thirty livres, was no ways accomplished by the law which prohibited the exportation at that boundary.

THE price of corn depends essentially on the quantity of surplus, which maintains a kind of balance between the unequal strengths of the buyers and the sellers of this commodity. Now soon after harvest, as corn is every where in plenty, the amount of the needs, and the quantity of corn which exists, can never be compared with any precision;

cision; it is then possible to send out of the kingdom, a material part of the surplus of the year, without raising the price above thirty livres.

BUT as the consumption diminishes by degrees the quantity of corn dispersed through the kingdom, it becomes more easy to judge of the relations between that quantity and the amount of the needs: It is then that the part of the surplus which has been exported, produces a very sensible effect upon opinion; and the same exportation which did not raise the price to thirty livres, immediately after harvest, may be the cause of its rising to forty or fifty towards the end of the year.

IN fine, soon after harvest, the price of corn in a province, is settled by nothing almost but the plenty of the crop in that province; it is only by little and little, and by the communication of different intelligence from one end of France to the other, that the prices are established in proportion to
the

the general circumstances of the kingdom.

IT results from these observations, that the fixing a price for the exportation of corn, cannot be a safeguard but in so far as that price is set very low.

BUT in that case we fall into another inconveniency, much less prejudicial, indeed, but which ought still to be pointed out, in order to present this object under every appearance.

SUPPOSE the exportation price is fixed at twenty livres; a run of good crops, and even the precautions taken to prevent exportation, bring corn to this rate in some frontier provinces, and a quantity of it is then sold to foreigners; but these foreigners, in whose country corn has been dearer for some time, would equally have bought at twenty-five livres, if the exportation had been permitted sooner; thus the law which has put a stop to this exportation, so long as corn was not at twenty livres, becomes a real damage to the kingdom.

since it receives so much the less money in exchange for its produce.

It is thus that the determination of a price for exportation, is in every case a modification liable to some inconveniences.

C H A P. IV.

On Modifications in respect to Quantities and Places.

THE price at which the exportation of corn shall be allowed may be fixed by a permanent law; but nothing less than a law promulgated every year can modify this export according to the limits of quantities and of places.

A PERPETUAL law could never determine that such a quantity shall be allowed to be exported every year, or that this exportation shall be free in one part of the kingdom, and forbidden in another; unless the legislator was a confident

fidant of nature, and foresaw the effect of the variety of crops, and of the inconstancy of seasons.

CHAP. V.

On the fixing a Time certain for the Exportation of Corn.

SUCH a modification is much more compatible with a permanent law, because it might be looked on as an institution constantly expedient, that the exportation of corn should never be permitted but at the expiration of a certain term after harvest; either that the relations between the needs and the quantities may, before that time, be the more generally known, or to give time to lay up a proper provision for home consumption.

On Imposts on the Exportation of Corn.

THE people accustom themselves to look upon corn as one of the gifts of nature, like the air they breathe; and they are but too much disposed already, to accuse *men* of what is the effect of the seasons, to let it be expedient to cloud their imaginations still more, by establishing an impost on an article necessary to their subsistence. That which might be laid on the exportation of corn would not prevent its being exported in times of general dearth, and the people would soon believe that this commerce was encouraged in order to encrease the revenue. We cannot be too careful to remove every motive of confusion in the ideas of the people, on the only object that employs their thoughts, bread and corn.

BESIDES, all exportation permitted on payment of certain duties, would necessarily

farly participate of the general inconveniences of a free exportation, or of those of a prohibition.

A SMALL impost would not stop the exportation of that corn which it would be important to keep.

A CONSIDERABLE impost would, at other times, hinder the exportation of that corn which it would be expedient to sell to foreign nations.

THE establishment of an impost would not then secure us against the inconveniences attending a constant prohibition, or a constant liberty.

CHAP. VII.

On the Bounties granted for the Exportation of Corn. Laws of England on that Subject.

IT is in England only that a reward, ascertained by law, is given to those who export corn, when it is at a certain price.

THE respect entertained for the lights of a nation gives authority to whatever it doth. I am persuaded that one of the motives which has the most contributed to foment in France the desire of exportation, is that law of England, which went so far as to excite that exportation by sacrifices. Men thought themselves moderate, in only asking liberty to export, whilst the usage of this liberty was elsewhere an object of gratification and recompence.

BUT may not England be mistaken? But the dangers which *she* has escaped, will France be able to preserve herself likewise from them? This is what we shall endeavour to examine to the bottom?

LET us first consider to what aim can tend the bounties or rewards given to those who export corn.

IT is boldly asserted, that it is to the institution of these bounties that England owes her agriculture. These kinds of attributions of any event to one single cause, when many others may have contributed

contributed to it, are always very doubtful. How can an exact repartition be made of what belongs to that law, and what is the natural effect either of the increase of commerce and wealth, or of internal tranquillity, or of various other circumstances?

WE must take notice likewise that all laws which are advantageous to the proprietors, are always more cried up than those which are favourable to the people; this is natural: all ideas, even those which are spread in books, are formed and fortified only by the commerce of men who are instructed, and capable of thinking. The people have no share in this; *they* have then no influence over opinions. These all arise from the class of proprietors. Among them, no doubt, there may be found a great number of persons capable of preferring the public good to their private advantage; but as every one, without thinking of it, generalizes his class, the proprietors, in the end, persuade themselves

themselves that *they alone* compose the state.

THIS disposition to extend the circle to which we belong, applies to all objects, and may be observed continually. If man carries his meditations to distant things, he composes the universe of creatures like himself; if he brings back his attention to the earth, he thinks himself the sole inhabitant of it, and reckons for nothing those various beings capable of pleasure and of pain, but whose figure is different from his own; if he concentrates his views to human creatures only, he makes a privileged class of his own colour, the white calls himself the master, and believes the black is his slave. In fine, in the interior of societies we see the same spirit; the gentry, the rich, the foldier, the lawyer, every one extends his space, and that of his order; then errors multiply, and from one step to another they think the country is made for towns, towns for courts, and kingdoms for kings; and the proprietors,

prietors, in the sincerity of their hearts, celebrate, under the name of the public good, every law that is made for them alone.

Who knows if we ought not to ascribe to this principle, some part of the praises given in England to the bounty laws, so favourable to the price of corn?

It often happens also, that an institution which has only hastened an event, is looked upon as the only and necessary cause of it. These ideas are perpetuated by tradition; nobody takes the pains to follow the chain of circumstances, and they renounce all thoughts of forming a more precise and a more enlightened judgement; besides, such a study would be extremely difficult, and still more uncertain.

Let us endeavour then to judge the present question by the light of reason.

I PERCEIVE, in the first place, that those bounties on exportation are not necessary to produce the exchange of the superfluous corn against the money,

ney, or the different goods of other countries; for the same corn which was carried out of England when the price was twenty-seven livres, because government gave three livres bounty, would have been carried out at twenty-four livres, if that bounty had not existed.

WHAT then is the manifest aim of bounties? It is to provide a way that the surplus corn in a country may be carried out of it even when the prices are high, so that this surplus can never serve to moderate them.

• IN effect, if when corn in England was worth twenty-seven livres, there had not been a bounty of three livres on the exportation, the foreigners who bought it, because it stood them in but twenty-four livres, would have staid till it really was fallen to that price, if they had been without the bounty granted by government: and as the effect of a surplus you have really no use for, is to temper the pretensions and power of the sellers; it is certain that, without

the bounty, corn would have fallen in England to the price at which foreigners would have purchased it; and yet the nation would have received the same sum of money from them for the sales at twenty-four livres, without the bounty, as for those of twenty-seven livres, when the public really paid three of them.

THESE bounties on exportation are then simply a means found out to raise the price of corn in the home market. The advanced price of this article favours the proprietors of land, as long as the amount of imposts, the price of workmanship, and that of the other productions of the earth, are not in proportion to it. Thus, till that time, this advanced price excites culture; but we have shewn that, amongst all the means that may contribute to this end, it is the most dangerous, the most fatal, and the least durable.

It was king William who promoted the law for a bounty; he was sure of the

the whig party, and he wanted to gain the tory party, composed principally of the landed gentlemen; and certainly this institution was one means to please them. It is seldom that private motives lead to the public good, in matters of administration; if on uniting all the circumstances that form the advantage of the proprietors, the price of corn did not appear high enough, it would have been better to have favoured them by moderating the taxes; but that is a means to which sovereigns seldom give the preference, because they are unwilling to distinguish their convenience from that of the society, and their treasure from that of the public.

FINALLY, if the culture of neglected lands had need of encouragement, it would have been better to have given a bounty on breaking up uncultivated lands, than on exportation; it would have answered the same end, without raising the general price of subsistence, and in the sequel that of workmanship.

ship *. However it is to this last circumstance, that must be partly attributed

* I know very well that they shew you tables by which it appears that the price of corn in England was lower in the years that followed the bounty act than in those which preceded it †; but the same disparity is to be observed in France at the same æras, though prohibitions were in force there, whilst exportation was encouraged in England; thus the low prices happening in both kingdoms under opposite laws, must necessarily be attributed to general circumstances. What appears certain, is that since the æra of the bounty act in England the prices of corn have been about twenty per cent. dearer there than in France, one year with another ‡; and so it ought naturally to be: and this is sufficient to support the reasonings contained in this chapter.

† We have here a striking instance how little dependance is to be had upon averages, as the periods may be picked out by design, or as they may happen to be taken by chance. It has been asserted, and it is here admitted by this French author, that corn was cheaper after the bounty act

‡ If so, the average price of corn in France during that period must have been about 17 livres, 6 sols, 8 deniers, or 15 s. 2 d. sterling, the septier, or 4 livres = 3 s. 6 d. sterling, the standard bushel: why then does the author reckon 24 livres the septier, which is about 4 s. 9 d. half-penny the bushel, that is about 33 per cent. dearer, a reasonable price?

buted the superiority which the greatest part of the manufactures in rivalry with

act took place than it was before, and so it appears to be by the tables in Smith's tracts by one halfpenny per bushel, or 4 d. per quarter, during the two twenty years periods nearest that era; but the first stops short of it by four years, and the latter takes them in, though, as to the present question, they belong to the other; this occasions the balance of 4 d. per quarter in favour of the exportation system, which is in fact 2 s. 1 d. per quarter against it: for thus stands the matter. In the year 1689, which must necessarily be included in the non-bounty period, for the bounty act did not pass till March, 1689, before which time all the wheat must have been sown; (indeed it must have been sown before the revolution, before the landing of king William, and during all the alarms and agitations of that anxious time, which may naturally be supposed rather to have prevented than to have promoted the sowing of corn); I say, in the year 1689, wheat was cheaper than in the year 1690 by 4 s. 8 d. the quarter Windsor measure of best wheat, or 3 s. 8 d. statute measure of middling wheat, and so for the several periods below set down.

	Windsor measure, best Wheat.	Statute measure, middl. Wheat.
	l. s. d.	l. s. d.
1689, last year before bounty could affect the growth -	1 10 0	1 3 9
1690, first year in which bounty could affect the growth -	1 14 8	1 7 5
Balance in favour of non bounty, or corn rose more than one-seventh or 14 per cent. after the bounty -	0 4 8	0 3 8
		3 years

with those of England, have acquired in the commerce of Europe.

THIS

	Windsor mea- sure, best Wheat.	Statute mea- sure, middle Wheat.
	l. s. d.	l. s. d.
3 years, from 1687 to 1689, both inclusive	1 13 8	1 6 8
13 years, from 1690 to 1692, both inclusive	1 18 5	1 10 5
Balance in favour of non-bounty, or corn rose one-seventh, or 14 per cent. after the boun- ty	0 4 9	0 3 9
4 years, from 1688 to 1689, both inclusive	1 13 9	1 6 8
4 years, from 1690 to 1693, both inclusive	2 5 9	1 16 1
Balance in favour of non-bounty, or corn rose above one-third, or 35 per cent. after the boun- ty	0 12 0	0 9 5
10 years, from 1680 to 1689, both inclusive	2 0 2	1 11 9
10 years, from 1690 to 1699, both inclusive	2 16 4	2 4 6
Balance in favour of non-bounty, or corn rose above two-fifths, or 40 per cent. after the boun- ty	0 16 2	0 12 9
20 years, from 1670 to 1689, both inclusive	2 5 3	1 15 9
20 years, from 1690 to 1709, both inclusive	2 7 10	1 17 10
Balance in favour of non-bounty, or corn rose above one-eigh- teenth, or 5 per cent. after the bounty	0 2 7	0 2 1
T		25 years,

THIS superiority, which must have taken from Great Britain the means of paying for foreign goods by her industry, (whilst her soil was already destitute of particular productions §) would have hurt prodigiously the prosperity of that kingdom, if a thousand lucky circumstances had not counterbalanced these disadvantages. Let us point out some of them.

WE

	Windsor mea- sure, best Wheat.	Statute mea- sure, middl. Wheat.
	l. s. d.	l. s. d.
25 years, from 1665 to 1689, both inclusive	2 4 5	1 15 1
25 years, from 1690 to 1714, both inclusive	2 9 5	1 19 1
Balance in favour of non-bounty, or corn rose about one-ninth, or 11 per cent. after the boun- ty	0 5 0	0 4 0
Tr.		

§ Tin, lead, coal, wool, and some others, seem to be as peculiar to Great Britain as wine, oil, or any other is to France. I believe neither of them has any production which is, strictly speaking, peculiar to itself. If it is said *French* wine is peculiar to France; I answer, *English* wool is peculiar to England. Tr.

WE see, first, England remedies the dearth of her manufactures, by making use of her political strength, to make treaties with Russia, and especially with Portugal, by means whereof she has procured herself a preference which mere mercantile calculations would not have given her.

By the same force, or by her dexterity, she has hindered Spain from making the like treaties with France, as it might be expedient for the reciprocal interest of these two kingdoms.

By her superiority at sea, she has rendered the navigation of her ships more safe, in time of war, and consequently cheaper than that of other nations her rivals; an advantage which, at that time, gives a particular favour to her goods.

By the same maritime power, she has procured herself an exclusive commerce of prodigious extent, by establishing considerable colonies in Asia and America.

By the institution of a paper money, founded on the public credit, (a circumstance inherent to the nature of her government,) she has not had occasion to pay, either in the productions of the earth, or in the works of industry, for that sum of money necessary in all states for circulation, and the facility of exchanges.

A KINGDOM where workmanship is dearer than elsewhere, has need to oppose most vigorously the introduction of foreign manufactures; and England, under cover of a political liberty, generally cherished and respected, has been able to establish laws of the utmost rigour against contraband trade; laws which would never have been tolerated in monarchical countries, where the individuals do not perceive any constant connection between their happiness and the support of the strength and of the riches of the nation *. IN

* It is apprehended that the laws of France against smuggling are as severe as those of England; and probably more persons have been hanged or broke on the wheel for that offence, at *Valence* only, than ever were executed for it in England. Tr.

IN fine, England thwarted in the commerce of her works of industry, destitute of productions peculiar to her soil, and not yet possessing the immense resources which her colonies have procured her, must have been anxious about the means which she had to pay for the goods of other countries; and it was to diminish this inconvenience, that she restrained, by excessive duties, the importation of foreign wines, and of those of France in particular. It is likewise under the shelter of this precious government, which attaches the English to their country, that they have been brought to submit to privations which would appear severe to the poorest nations in the north.

WE see nevertheless, that at the same time that England encouraged the exportation of her corn by bounties, she employed all her power to diminish the number of exchanges with foreigners; and whilst by these bounties, she raised the price of workmanship, she redou-

bled her efforts and anxiety to prevent the introduction of the works of industry of other nations.

THERE is a contrariety in these economical views.

THE best means of preventing the greatest dangers in commerce with foreigners, is to hinder this commerce from hurting the national population; but in that case the exportation of the necessaries of life must not be excited by sacrifices.

THE best means of guarding the national industry against foreign competition, is by maintaining moderation in the price of workmanship; but then you must not raise the price of subsistence by bounties on exportation.

THE English, favoured in a thousand manners by the several circumstances we have laid open, would of course not feel very sensibly the effect of their laws about corn; content besides with the prosperity of their country, and naturally averse from researches in theory
on

on commerce and finances *, they would naturally respect all their ancient institutions; and possibly there might have been some inconvenience in changing these bounties suddenly, when all other social circumstances were become proportioned to it. However, apprehension and necessity have often constrained government to suspend even the liberty of exportation, and there are twelve years of prohibition from the æra of the bounty act to this day.

ONE more observation must be made on bounties on exportation; it is that they necessarily oblige a restraint to be laid on the importation of foreign corn; without this precaution, by bringing corn into the country where a bounty is given on exportation, and then re-exporting it, and repeating this manœuvre, the public treasure might be

* Strange! has the author never heard of Child, Davenant, the British Merchant, Gee, Decker, Smith (on Wool) and innumerable others, besides the constant debates in parliament? Tr.

put to immense expence ; and it is thus that the first institution which tends to raise the price of corn, draws after it another of the same kind.

ENGLAND can have drawn but one particular advantage from the establishment of her bounties on exportation, and duties on importation, that is, that by graduating them respectively in proportion to the course of her markets, it might contribute to maintain a sort of equality in the prices ; but she might have attained to this, by other limitations, and by arrangements which would not have kept up constantly the price of this necessary of life.

BESIDES, there is no doubt that England may be more bold than France in the commerce of corn ; surrounded on all sides by the sea, she can much more easily receive succours, and whilst her colonies pursue agriculture, and bring her corn, France, far from expecting any from hers, is obliged to feed them.

THERE

THERE is, in fine, a great consideration applicable to all the arguments which are drawn from the example of other states to serve as lessons to France, that is, that the disparity in point of population, absolutely changes all principles on this matter. It is easy to render this truth, sensible.

HOLLAND contains a million of inhabitants, England six, France twenty-four: thus with equal crops, when Holland or any other like state needs an extraordinary supply of 100,000 septiers to moderate the prices, England must have six hundred thousand, and France two millions four hundred thousand. Yet this disproportion in the needs, is very far from being balanced by a like disproportion in the resources; for if there should happen to be only 300,000 septiers to sell in the markets of Europe, and that the only buyers were the three nations we have named, Holland would be able to possess herself of one-third of this corn, as, for
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the acquisition of that quantity, she would be equal in strength to France and to England; she then would attain her end, whilst the two kingdoms would not be relieved by obtaining the same quantity.

Thus the more populous a country is, the more ought it to be cautious in its laws of exportation; because it necessarily finds more difficulty than other states, when it would obtain a supply proportioned to its needs.

We may then conclude from these different observations, that even without looking on the English bounty laws as contrary to the principles of policy, which ought to be adopted by all states, it would be at least absolutely incompatible with the general circumstances of such a kingdom as France.

C H A P. VIII.

*On the known Modifications applicable to
the Liberty of the interior Commerce.
Examination of the old Laws on that
Head.*

FOR several centuries past, the times of scarcity and dearneſs have given birth to a multitude of reſtraints, which have been removed in times of tranquillity and plenty.

THESE reſtraints have been more or leſs ſevere, according to the ſpirit of the times and the degrees of alarm. For a long time it was forbidden to carry corn from one province to another without a particular permiſſion. Sometimes the quantity was preſcribed which might be kept in a magazine; at others the ſtoring up of any appeared a crime; in a word, fright and ignorance have given occaſion ſucceſſively to a multitude of regulations, into a detail of which it would be uſeleſs to enter. I ſhall only

stop at some of the old institutions, renewed by the law of 1770, now abrogated.

THE liberty of the internal commerce of corn was permitted; but the legislators having presumed, no doubt, that it might be abused, had subjected it to several conditions. I shall examine only the most essential.

THOSE who would exercise the commerce of corn, were ordered to register their names and qualities, in the offices of the respective jurisdictions.

THE receivers of the public money, and the farmers in the country were forbidden to engage in this commerce.

IT was forbidden to sell any where but in a market,

I SHALL begin by observing on the first condition, that it is not the knowledge of the persons who carry on a commerce that can be of any importance to the good of the state; it is, at most, only that of their operations. Now to proceed from the knowledge of the
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the man to that of his actions, there is no way traced out by the law ; there is none which is just : every law then which orders merchants to register their names, to qualify themselves to carry on the commerce of corn, and which does not declare at the same time, in what case, and in what manner their undertakings may be taken cognizance of, exposes them to oppression, or at least gives them room to be apprehensive of it. Besides, as long as opinion throws a sort of opprobrium on the commerce of corn in general, to order a man's name and condition to be registered before he can practise it, is to forbid it. Nobody but petty chandlers can submit to such a condition ; it would never be fulfilled by men of a higher class ; such a restraint then would never be expedient, but on a supposition that the intervention of rich merchants would never be of use in that commerce : but little merchants can only carry on a trade in the neighbourhood ;

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they

they have neither the correspondences nor the funds necessary to load a ship, nor to send it from one port of France to another; as little have they capitals to buy in times of plenty, in the intention of keeping their merchandize a year or two, if the low prices encourage such a scheme.

YET both these operations are useful to society; and since the latter may be done by financiers as well as merchants, to prohibit that commerce to them, is not presenting any fixt idea on the subject; for this commerce cannot be hurtful on account of the persons, but only on account of the facts and circumstances.

IN fine, at the times when it may be for the good of the state to buy, in order to lay it up, there is no inconvenience in the farmers doing it; it is even a means to make their money come out, and to draw it from a state of idleness hurtful to the society: that class of men can make an advantage of it only by
affairs

affairs within their reach, and the compass of their understanding; whereas merchants, whose industry applies to many objects, have resources of all kinds to put their capitals in motion.

On the Prohibition to buy any where but in a Market.

AMONGST all the conditions of the law which we now examine, the prohibition (and a very old one it is) to buy any where but in a market, seems to me to belong to a more intelligent view of things: let us endeavour to discover what was the idea of the legislator in this respect. This prohibition may be attacked, by alledging that it restrains the liberty of the subject, without any advantage to the community. What signifies it, truly, to the good of the state, whether Paul sells James his corn in his own farm yard or in the next market, especially when the first manner is most convenient for them both?

THIS

THIS prohibition is not vindicated by alledging that such sales necessarily diminish the plenty in the public markets; for if these sales are made to merchants, they have the same interest with the proprietors to carry the corn they have bought to market; if these sales are made to consumers, the quantity of corn to be sold in the markets will, no doubt, be diminished, but the quantity needed will be equally so, as those who shall have bought at the granaries will not be buyers at the markets; so the proportions which may occasion plenty or scarcity *there*, will not be changed.

BESIDES, leaving the proprietors at liberty to sell their corn where they please, is no ways abolishing the markets, as the general conveniency which first instituted them remains still the same, and concurs to their support.

IN fine, to prohibit selling any where but in a market, is at the same time forbidding to buy any where else, for there can be no buyer without a seller. Now
to

to prohibit a whole nation from buying any where but in certain places, the necessities of life, is laying a kind of obligation on the sovereign always to collect there sellers, and reasonable sellers too.

I HAVE hitherto laid open the principal reasons which militate against the prohibition of selling elsewhere than in the markets; they are good ones, without doubt; but their friends weaken them by exaggerating them; by representing, for instance, a seller and a buyer living in the same place, going eight or ten miles to deal for a sack of corn, which the one carries to market, and the other carries back from market. Such pictures are too strong; the rigour of the law never extended to stop these kind of sales. Besides, the consumers live most of them in cities, towns, and villages, where there are markets; those who do not live there, and are neither farmers nor proprietors, have almost always something to sell, or something else to buy, and do not feel any restraint,

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when on their return from those markets where they have so many things to do, they bring back, four or five times a year, the quantity of corn which is necessary for them.

IN general, when corn is carried to a market, they are the proprietors who go to seek the consumers; and when it is sold in farms or granaries, it is the merchants or the consumers who go to seek the proprietors.

LET us first suppose them to be the consumers: this usage would be very troublesome; for it would occasion a considerable loss of time. One man, proprietor of a hundred septiers *, can have them carried to market and sold, by going from home with some of his servants for one day; whereas the hundred consumers who will buy these hundred septiers, will go from home one day each, if they must go in quest of their subsist-

* The original says a thousand; but that would take fifty good English waggons and teams, too much for a French farmer or proprietor, or for an English one either. *Tr.*

ance: even this is not saying enough; for though it may require but one day for the proprietor to sell his hundred septiers, because he knows the general rendezvous of buyers, it may take perhaps two days for each of the consumers, if they must strole through the country, from farm to farm, to find not only the proprietors of corn, but also such as shall be disposed to sell; and sometimes among these latter, those who will consent to put themselves out of their way for such a trifle. The proprietors of corn have already too much advantage over the consumers; it would be very unhappy if a new way of dealing should come to fortify still more this superiority.

SUCH an apprehension, say they, would not be well founded; the merchants will buy of the proprietors, and carry the corn to market in their stead. It may be so; such a substitution would, in that case, be even very necessary for the public order; for it is requisite that

the poor consumer may know where to find, without trouble, the little portion of corn that he can buy at a time. Thus, in proportion as the proprietors should dispense themselves from carrying to market, or should accustom themselves to wait for buyers at home; the merchants, the chandlers, and all the agents and go-betweens who buy of the proprietors to carry to market, would become persons of absolute utility.

HERE, doubtless, you begin to discover the intention of the legislator in forbidding to sell any where but in a market. He thought he must chuse between this subjection and the continual intervention of merchants: he thought that, to banish this intervention, which must be at the people's cost, he must oblige the proprietors and the consumers to deal with one another, by obliging the farmers to carry their corn to market, (that general rendezvous of consumers,) instead of selling in their granaries, where the merchants only would go to deal.

THIS

THIS is, I apprehend, the true spirit of this law; it was an intelligent glimpse, but imperfect in several respects.

FOR if the aim of this regulation was to prevent the dearth which the operation of commerce often causes, it was not enough to ordain that none should buy but at market; since, although this obligation put a stop to the operations of the merchants who buy at the granaries to sell at market, yet it did not prevent the purchases which might be made at market itself, on mere speculation, and to sell again some time after, a kind of commerce by which the merchants equally contribute to the dearth of corn.

YET at the same time that this law did not sufficiently prevent the intervention of merchants, in the circumstances where that intervention is dangerous, this same law cramped the commerce in a species of enterprizes useful to the public welfare; such as, for instance, great purchases on speculation when prices are

low, purchases which would be made difficultly, and with reluctance, if it was not *then* allowable to buy from the granary; such are likewise at all times the sending corn from one province to another; these succours, which are a most strict and incontestable right, could not be given, under a restraint to buy only at market; for a pressing need must be expeditiously supplied; several vessels often wait in one port, for the subsistence of part of the kingdom, and they must not be kept till the necessary provisions for them could be bought up, slowly, at neighbouring markets. Besides, a purchase any thing considerable, made at the same place and in a given time, would make a sensible difference in the prices; men of note who carry on the business by sea, jealous of their reputation, would never make such purchases in open market, and in the sight of the people, who, in dear times, always look on those transactions with dislike.

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IN general, we often observe a kind of contradiction, or of timidity in the old laws, of which we have been running over the principal conditions: we see there, on one hand, the internal liberty of the commerce of corn declared useful, and expressly allowed; on the other, we find conditions which almost always tend to prevent its being made use of: it seems as if the legislator had had a confused notion that the intire liberty of the commerce of corn was attended with advantages and inconveniences; but that he had not thoroughly settled in his own mind, the precise time when the utility ended and the abuse began. This uncertainty must necessarily lead to imperfect precautions, which required to be supplied by a toleration whenever they rose to excess, and called tacitly on opinion itself to place the barrier which the law had not dared to fix.

THIS spirit in legislation is more timid than wise; it is to discourage and to

permit, to excite and to restrain. If the public opinion is reasonable, the law should be made conformable to it; if this opinion is contrary to the good of the community, it should neither be fortified, nor kept up. Doubt, uncertainty and fear ought to agitate the breast of the legislator, but it is not till that agitation is calmed by the discovery and knowledge of the truth, that the law should be enacted, for the law should be plain and positive, as the obedience to it ought to be.

C H A P. IX.

Should the Markets be ordered to be furnished with Corn by Authority?

ALL exertion of authority which is not pointed out by the law, is one of the greatest abuses in society; this method foment in the subjects a sentiment of uneasiness which destroys their comfort.

NATURE

NATURE has put so many unsurmountable obstacles to the happiness of men, that one of the greatest benefits which they can receive from their rulers, is to be preserved from all the evils of imagination, which several institutions of society still maintain.

THE uncertainty of their rights, the feeling of an injustice, the appearance of a partiality, distill continually a stream of bitterness, which it would be easy to dry up, by destroying all arbitrary dispositions, which are not commanded by necessity. The subalterns, to whom, from one degree to another, authority is intrusted, have so much pleasure in commanding, that their levity or imprudence cannot be too strictly guarded against. But would we know all the inconveniences of it, it is not solely on the number of facts that we must fix our attention; we should also measure, if possible, the extent of the uneasiness inspired by all the acts of power, whereof the principles are not known;

known ; it is thus that the *taille* *, it is thus that the *corvée* †, it is thus that the militia are sources of grievances. Nothing should be entrusted to the capricious will of man, but what one would leave to chance ; and nothing should be entrusted to chance, but what one would have aggrandized and multiplied by the imagination and by hope : thus the happiest nation would be that, which should never know the supreme power but by acts of beneficence ; for then the less they comprehended that power, the less they know of the ways of its proceeding, the more their unrestrained imaginations would add to their happiness.

AMONGST

* A species of land tax. *Tr.*

† The highway duty. This is complained of in France as a very great grievance, owing principally, I suppose, to this, that the labour of the people is not confined to the repair of the roads in the respective parishes where they dwell ; but the inhabitants of one parish are liable to be sent, at the arbitrary pleasure of the *intendant*, etc. to work on the roads in any other parish in the province, however distant from their homes, *Tr.*

AMONGST the arbitrary dispositions, must be reckoned orders given, without any fixt principle, to the farmers or to the proprietors, to bring so much corn, on such a day, to such a market; the public happiness protests against such a custom.

WERE it possible to establish a general rule, uniform and constant, by which every proprietor knew at all times what quantity of corn he must carry to such a market; this perpetual convention would form one of the bases of the community; no body would have reason to complain, no body would be made uneasy by it: but such a law is impossible.

ON the other hand, as long as men are in the habit of coming to market to deal for their different needs, it is of importance to public order, that they may find the necessaries of life for their money; for if in a well-ordered society no proprietor can be compelled, unless in cases of extremity, to a disposal of
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his corn which is not prescribed by the laws; in such a society likewise no subject should die of hunger, when he has money, and there is a surplus of subsistence. It is not therefore either through indifference, or by abandoning this last principle, the most sacred of all, that I have insisted on the rights of property against arbitrary dispositions; but because it appears to me very easy to prevent the cry of famine in the midst of abundance, without displaying any act of authority towards the proprietors, but by constantly taking sage precautions. This shall be the object of our researches in the last part of this work.

C H A P. X.

May the Regulations on the Commerce of Corn be entrusted to every several Province?

OF all precautions, this seems the least expedient; it has only inconveniences, without any advantage. The persons who have the superintendence or the administration of the provinces, are desirous of maintaining the tranquillity of them, by the moderate price of subsistence, and thus to captivate the affections of the people who surround them; but the prosperity of the kingdom is not committed to their care, and the relations which the province they govern, bears to the other parts of the state, are often foreign to their combinations.

THUS the more the laws and the administration relative to corn is divided, the more the general harmony is endangered.

dangered. We then make a separate kingdom of every province, and deprive ourselves of the utility of union, in the most general concern, and the most essential object of the community, the procurement of necessaries, and the vent of superfluities. It is needless to waste time on this method, which would be truly fatal.

C H A P. XI.

Would it be expedient to fix the Price of Corn?

IT has been sometimes proposed to fix the price of corn; there is still existing an ordonance of *Philip the fair* on that subject, but it was of no long duration.

THE price of playhouse tickets, or that of the works of a manufactory, the only one of its kind, may be fixed; in a word, that of all objects whose competition is of small extent; but a thousand

land millions worth of corn, and needs to the same amount, can never be subjected to such a rule.

IT could not be put in execution by an army as numerous as the nation itself. Besides, the determination of a fixt and general price would oppose all circulation whatsoever; for how could the corn bought in Picardy, be sold at the same price in Paris? Must not the expence of carriage be added? If that may not be done, all communication would be stopt.

NOTHING then would be more impracticable or more absurd than such an institution: but behind this idea possibly a great view may be discovered; namely, that it is to be wished that all the risks in crops should fall upon the proprietors; because they alone can, without any great inconvenience, lose at one time, and gain at another; whereas when they proportion, according to the events, the price of the necessaries of life whereof they are the distributors, they

they make partners in their gaming that indigent class of the community, who have nothing to stake but their bare necessities.

C H A P. XII.

On Provisions directed to be made by the Government.

GOVERNMENT interferes directly in the commerce of corn, when it orders merchants to transport it from one province to another, or to bring it from foreign countries: the effect of this intervention, when it is perceived, is commonly to drive away all other merchants; for acting only in order to gain, they are afraid to enter into a competition with the public treasure, which can afford to lose, and means so to do. Then the business of government is augmented one day more than another; it at first thought only of affording a moderate help; it must soon

soon provide for every need, because none other contributes any assistance; its operations thus extended may sometimes exceed its abilities; and by a second inconvenience, whilst it loses, it is suspected of gaining, and the people ascribe to interested views the succours which they receive from its beneficence.

THUS the *constant* intervention of the government in the commerce of corn, is contrary to the good of the state; it is especially destructive of that precious opinion, that tender confidence which ought to bind the people to their sovereign.

BUT at the same time that this *constant* intervention is very dangerous, the government in France can never answer that circumstances may not happen, in which it shall be obliged to interfere for a time, in procuring the provisions necessary for a province, or for part of the kingdom.

IN effect, if on a rise of price, whether it proceeds from a real scarcity, or from the abuse of liberty, the people become exasperated against monopolists; if, on good grounds, or without any reason, they impute their sufferings to them; if the considerable merchants, who alone are in a condition to carry on the maritime commerce, perceive they should be obliged to sell the corn they should bring into France very dear, because so they would have bought it abroad; they will fear being insulted, or hardly thought of, by the people, and to be only feebly defended by men better informed: the benefit which they might reap, will not induce them to brave such a disagreeable situation. In vain will the minister then promise them his protection; he may defend them by the sovereign power against the insults of the populace, but he has no shield proof against opinion.

If however administration sees the merchants discouraged, if it fears that
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the subsistence of part of the kingdom may be uncertain; if it learns only that one province has corn for no more than a month; if still more exaggerated accounts succeed, then the general encouragements which might be given to the merchants, and the personal interest they might be supposed to have, will no longer suffice, and very probably a commissary will be charged to buy forthwith a certain quantity of corn, and to send it to the places where the dearth is feared.

FROM one age to another, the public subsistence and tranquillity is left to the power of liberty, to the force of personal interest, and to many another respectable abstract principle; but at a month's distance, but at a week's! every thing changes, and we fly to the remedy, by the nearest and the most certain practical means.

THERE are still other circumstances in which government may order purchases of corn.

IF political events, which it would not have known, engage it to form magazines, it must charge some one in particular with it.

AT all times, provisions ought to be prepared for the troops, not only to be certain of it, but also because it ought to be considered as important to furnish the soldiers with bread, instead of paying them the value of it in money; that they may never have any interest in the murmurs of the people, about the high or low prices of subsistence. These operations, however, require the choice of a commissary or a company, charged with the purchasing corn, on account of government.

FINALLY, an immense capital city imposes on administration a duty of continual vigilance. The assemblage near the prince of six hundred thousand people, who buy their bread every day at the bakers, necessitates, in various circumstances, some prudential operations which were not foreseen.

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WHEN one single day of dearth or of alarm may trouble the public order, the confidence one may have in the natural operation of commerce is not enough to banish anxiety; for fear does not proportion itself to the degrees of probability only; but also to the greatness of the danger: when the thunder rolls we are uneasy, though the chance of being struck with it can hardly be calculated.

AGAIN, when corn is dear every where, no merchant will send it into a poor province: he fears that the multitude may not be able to buy at the price at which he must sell, not to lose: another circumstance where government is obliged to intervene; for the subsistence of the province will be in great danger, if it does not order corn to be sent thither, and sold at a moderate price.

IN that case a distribution of money among the poor would be no longer sufficient, because it is the corn which

is wanting. Besides, the people have a repugnance to receive alms ; they only submit to it in distress, and often they may have suffered an injury before that time ; and when they had received these alms, they would have the same desire to buy bread cheap, and the prince's benefactions would not insure the docility of a rude multitude, incapable of remembrance and of gratitude.

THE merchants who would perceive all these circumstances, and who would judge soundly of them, would not hold themselves the less on the reserve, and would not embark themselves in selling corn at a high price in an indigent province.

THUS it cannot be certain that government will never intermeddle in buying corn and selling it again ; though it may be averred on good grounds, that it would do very ill to intermeddle in it always ; and it is thus that in political oeconomy and in administration, there is nothing absolute.

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THOU shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, are eternal laws, whose absolute simplicity is conformable to the simplicity of the principle which hath dictated them; these are laws made for the men of all countries and of all ages; but there is nothing which can less accord with this simplicity than the legislation concerning corn. How could the same restraint, the same liberty, the same system, be expedient for all times, when these times, with respect to corn, bear no relation to each other! The plentiful year recalls incessantly the idea of a superfluity, the dearthful year presents continually the fear of wanting the necessaries of life. It cannot then be prevented but that a permanent law which must traverse such dissimilar circumstances, must necessarily be imperfect, if it is absolute.

C H A P. XIII.

On Bounties on Importation.

A GENERAL and public reward granted by the sovereign on all foreign corn brought into his territories, is called a bounty on importation.

THESE encouragements are necessary when need is foreseen, and when corn being at a high price in that kingdom, is so likewise in foreign countries; for the merchants not perceiving any profit to be made by bringing corn from abroad to sell it in their own country, government may find it expedient to quicken these operations by a bounty.

THIS manner of providing for what is needed, is almost always applauded by the merchants, because it offers to them all an equal means of exercising their industry; whereas the choice of a commissary throws them out, and excites their envy and their displeasure.

BESIDES,

BESIDES, when the amount of the supply requisite is very considerable, the resources of the public treasure may not always be sufficient, and it may be more expedient for it to be assisted by the wealth in commerce.

IN fine, the merchants are so numerous, and draw after them so many interests and opinions in affairs of their department, that it is always politic to conform to *their* taste and *their* spirit, in all great operations of buying and selling.

BUT these bounties have their inconveniences, as well as their advantage. First, no permanent law can prescribe any thing on this kind of encouragements, as the measure of them ought to depend on that of the prices throughout all Europe; these bounties then cannot be determined but by administration; but that has need of many preliminary pieces of knowledge to determine the instant when these rewards will be expedient, and the degree of
extent

extent which ought to be given them: it must be well informed of the needs of the kingdom; it must have observed whether the dearth which prevails abroad, is general, or peculiar to some countries; it must examine the cause of it, in order to judge whether this dearth will be transitory or lasting.

WITHOUT these pieces of knowledge, and many more, government would give bounties at random, and might sacrifice money not only uselessly but dangerously.

ONE of the greatest inconveniences attending this method, is that it proclaims too loudly the anxiety of government; that thus it encreases the alarm, and heightens the prices. Foreigners themselves, informed by this publicity, raise their pretensions, and endeavour to make an advantage of the new favour granted to their commodity.

THEN the gratification first promised is no longer sufficient; it must be augmented by degrees, without acquiring
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at the same time a certainty of receiving even at that price the necessary supply: for it must be further observed, that in times of a general dearth, the merchants, who full well perceive that all events are against them, will not venture on speculations, without a great margin in their calculations to secure themselves against the chance of variations.

ALL these circumstances do not exist when prices are moderate abroad; but at such times the giving bounties is not thought of, because the natural relations between these prices and those in the kingdom, are sufficient to promote the commerce.

It is only in times of difficulty and of dearth that recourse is had to expedients; and then nothing but the concurrence of circumstances can decide, whether a general distribution of bounties will be sufficient and safe, or whether it will be more advisable to employ some merchants secretly, in order not
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to augment the uneasiness at home, and not to raise the prices abroad.

THIS last method may sometimes be much more frugal, and on certain occasions, it is the only secure resource, and consequently the only one conformable to the public good: in those cases it would be wrong to reject it out of regard to that plurality of agents produced by the public and general retribution of bounties; a regard to the interest of such a plurality would, in a case like that, become merely illusory, inasmuch as it would only be maintained by the sacrifice of the interests of the greatest of all pluralities, those of the whole nation.

SUCH mistakes however are pretty common: men think they always favour the greater number, by dividing between many an advantage which belonged to fewer persons before this partition; but they deceive themselves evidently, if, by the competition to which they give birth, they counteract the general good.

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THIS distinction is truly important, and it is for want of seizing it that men fall, I believe, into many errors. I shall give some instances of them.

WHEN the unity of operations expedient for the commerce to India was destroyed, (which unity was expressed by the name of *exclusive privilege*,) and that all merchants were admitted to this commerce, it was thought acting for the greater number, because, in fact, a field was opened to a greater number of speculators; but if this competition raised the price of foreign goods in the kingdom, and lowered that of French goods in India, certainly it counteracted the public interest, and what was done for the plurality of the agents, was a real detriment to the nation.

IF from similar motives, and to give Languedoc a greater or a more direct share in the commerce of France with the Scales in the Levant, that province should be permitted to follow that commerce directly, and to receive the returns
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in its ports, without the intervention of the town of Marseilles; it would be thought making the interest of the small number of persons who conduct the commerce of France to the Levant, yield to the interest of the greater number who would engage in it, and it would be thought serving the plurality.

But if this permission granted to the province of Languedoc, by augmenting the need of precautions against the plague, should a little encrease the chance of that terrible danger; or if the augmentation of the number of French merchants to the Levant should derange the institutions favourable to the general support of the national manufactures; then this permission, given for the interest of a greater number of merchants, would become contrary to the public interest, and the beneficence of the sovereign would be contracted, instead of being extended by it.

To how many other objects might not these reflections still be applied?

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○ LET the regulations be abolished which render more authentic the morals, the abilities, and the characters of the persons who fill the different professions in the community, and let every one become, without any formality, physician, barrister, notary, change broker; this liberty will put these professions within the reach of a much greater number of persons, and perhaps it may be thought doing a kindness to the plurality: but if all these precautions serve, some to prevent the people from putting their lives into the hands of quacks, others to guard the public confidence, their abolition will be a mischief to the multitude.

○ LET us not then be prejudiced blindly, and without examination, against all the privileges, all the barriers, and against all commissions, in short, given to a small number, since there are several of those restrictions which are only a means of attaining the general good.

THUS, to return more particularly to my subject, when the circumstances require management, secrecy, expedition; it is then serving the community to prefer the particular activity of such and such persons to the more general, but more slow and more uncertain movement of the merchants at large, excited by bounties; and, to be subjected, without exception, to this last method, through a desire of sharing the advantage among the greatest number of agents possible, would, in my opinion, be a mistake; for it is not the distribution of the advantage of the agents which here becomes the aim of the statesman; it is the succour necessary for a province, a people, a whole nation: and this is the good that is to be effected in the manner the most certain and the most expedient.

C H A P. XIV.

On the Bounties applicable to the internal Circulation of Corn.

I MEAN by this kind of bounties a retribution which should be promised for all corn brought into such a town, or such a province, whether it comes from foreign countries, or from some other part of the kingdom.

THIS method would be a source of abuses and inconveniences.

IT may be conceived that a bounty may be allowed on the foreign corn which arrives at a port, because there are staples established, and formalities observed, to prevent all confusion.

ENGLAND, however, when she granted bounties on the exportation of her corn, thought she could not secure herself against the inconveniences inseparable from that institution, but by stopping importation; but the abuses which she feared, are not comparable to

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those

those which a distribution of bounties in the interior of the kingdom would occasion. What a multitude of barriers would it not require, to prevent the same septier of corn from receiving the bounty over and over again ! Shall this encouragement by a bounty be confined to the corn brought to towns ?—Even then they must be guarded all round, lest the same corn should be carried out to be brought in again. And what a source of jealousy, of the villages and country against the towns, and even between province and province !

THE publicity of these bounties would only keep up the alarm ; and if recourse was had to them frequently, the circulation would be retarded ; because the merchants would accustom themselves to wait for the offer of a bounty, before they sent the necessary supplies.

ON the other hand, all persons who might have formed any speculations in hopes that corn would rise, would find themselves instantly baulked by the grant

of a bounty, which would raise them up unexpected competitors, and so they would abandon this commerce.

THE dearness of corn ought to be prevented, as much as possible, by the wisdom of the laws; above all, they should be modified with such intelligence that they may be expedient at all times; but when extraordinary circumstances call for the help of administration, it behoves it to avoid too great publicity in its expedients, of whatever nature they may be; for it would be to be wished that it should not be known, that there are times when the best contrived law is still imperfect; the exceptions which are made to it are so many proofs of its insufficiency. It is the part of a great minister to throw a veil over this, in order that the respect for the law may be always preserved, and that men may never cease from conforming their habits to it; as it comes to pass in the commerce of corn, when they perceive too frequent alterations in the system adopted by the sovereign.

C H A P. XV.

*Advantages and Inconveniences of a Law
on the Commerce of Corn, renewed
annually.*

WE have seen that every permanent and absolute law on the commerce of corn was exceedingly dangerous; we have shewn, at the same time, that most of the modifications hitherto employed, were liable to inconveniences; it remains for us to consider, whether a new law, promulgated every year, would be an expedient means to remedy the different difficulties which we have traced; and these are the reflections which have occurred to me on this subject.

IF there was constantly at the head of administration, a man whose extensive genius pervaded every circumstance, whose easy and pliant spirit knew how to adapt his intentions and designs to them, who, endowed with an ardent soul,
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and a cool understanding, was impassioned in the research of good, and calm in the choice of the means; who, an upright and wise judge of the rights of the different classes of the community, knew how to hold, with a steady hand, the balance between their pretensions; who, forming to himself a just idea of the public prosperity, seconded it without precipitation; and, considering the passions of men inseparable from humanity, as a fruit of this earth, proportioned his proceedings to this eternal nature, and represented to himself a picture of perfection, only to animate him to aspire to it, but not to be irritated by the obstacles he met in his way.

To such a man, the community might say with prudence, We prefer the constancy of your lights to the permanency of the law; look into our needs and our crops; examine at home and abroad what may be most expedient for us; permit, prohibit, modify the exportation of our corn, according to the plenty of

the year, according to the laws of other nations, according to the political situation of affairs, according to our character; consider with care, pronounce with wisdom; and since it is not in human power to fix those circumstances which nature has rendered fluctuating, let the law which shall issue from your councils be renewed every year, in order that it may be always conformable to our greatest welfare.

IN this case, such an administrator would sometimes permit, sometimes prohibit absolutely the exportation of corn; more frequently perhaps he would modify it in different manners, by limiting the places, the times, the circumstances, and the quantities.

IF he perceived that the crop was bad in the interior parts of the kingdom, he would not permit the frontier provinces to export their corn, even though it should be cheap there; whilst, if he had observed at another time, that the prices had got up in some parts of France,

France, only by particular manœuvres or by the plenty of money, he would then see much less inconveniency in selling to foreigners.

SOMETIMES, though the free exportation of corn was allowed in the kingdom in general, he might prohibit it in one or two provinces, destined more particularly to the making provision for a great city.

IN another circumstance, if he knew that several countries had considerable and pressing needs, whilst the prices were still very low in France, he would resolve not to permit any to be exported but on payment of a duty; in order that the kingdom might draw the greatest possible advantage from its own plenty and the scarcity abroad.

SOMETIMES, though exportation was prohibited in general, he would make an exception in favour of a nation in alliance with us which should be in need, or of another which it might

he of consequence to engage through gratitude.

ANOTHER time, though there was a sufficient plenty to permit exportation, he would suspend it, if this stop would distress a nation at war with France.

If he is suddenly informed that the countries which might supply the southern provinces are going to shut their ports, or to be disturbed in their navigation; he will instantly stop the exportation which had been permitted in the northern provinces, although the prices may not yet be risen there; but in order to reserve their surplus for the south of France, where circumstances are about to change.

If extraordinary events agitate the imagination, and spread a spirit of discontent, he will watch still more carefully over the moderation of the price of corn.

IN fine, for a long while, he will not interfere with this commerce, and will abandon the circulation to the industry

industry of the merchants; then all at once he will order purchases and stores to be laid up, if some particular motives determine him to it.

How many other combinations would not escape the vigilant eye capable of thus following the variety of circumstances, to found on this harmony the greatest welfare of the state?

BUT what a poor refuge it is from the imperfection of a permanent law, to fly to the imperfections of human nature! How chimerical the system which would have no strength, but so far as every virtue and every light should be the constant portion of those who govern! Could the conditions we have required be all filled for a time, what a burthen for a man! And what magnanimity must he not have, if he must oppose the sole resources of his brain, to inconveniences incessantly returning? If he must take upon himself all events: and pledge himself to the public opinion for

every thing! whilst the greatest circumstances lie out of his power; whilst he shall have for his judge a blind and ferocious multitude, which always imputes its misfortunes to the man in power, without ever reflecting on the laws of nature, and on the inconveniences inseparable from the social harmony! Ah! if there existed a minister capable of varying incessantly the laws on corn, in a manner conformable to the good of the state, and of not being terrified at such an enterprize, it would be perhaps a debt due to his virtues to preserve him from splitting on such a rock.

C H A P. XVI.

On the Establishment of a Council to regulate annually the Laws on Corn.

SOME part of the difficulties which we have traced out in the foregoing chapter, might be diminished by the creation of a permanent council, which should every year examine into the laws expedient for the commerce of corn; but this would be exposed perhaps to other inconveniences; for imagination having almost as powerful an influence as reality, upon commerce, the number of persons entrusted with the secret, must not be multiplied in times of alarm; publicity often makes an uneasiness become a real evil; whereas the most simple precautions are sufficient, when they are employed in secret.

BESIDES, the operations of the mind, which depend on a quick and comprehensive glance of the eye, on a fecundity

dity of resources, on that moderation especially, so little known, can never be shared; the man capable of uniting these several qualities, would quickly, by the extensiveness of his lights, and the strength of his mind, possess himself of that pre-eminence which belongs to him, and would soon be alone, though in the midst of many.

End of the Third Part

PART IV.

Reflections on the most expedient System.

CHAP. I.

Preliminary Observations.

A PERMANENT law to prohibit or to permit the exportation of corn, would be very dangerous.

THE interior liberty has several advantages, but it is liable to great abuses.

ALL the modifications which we have enumerated, yield but an imperfect remedy to the several difficulties which have been laid open.

THE passing a new law every year, exposes us to the errors inseparable from humanity,

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WHAT method must we then follow? Is there any perfect one? None; undoubtedly; and this is, perhaps, the most certain truth that can be gathered from a profound meditation on the commerce of corn; but that permanent law must be adopted, which might prevent the most dangerous deviations, which might obviate the greatest number of inconveniences, that, in fine, which would call for exceptions, and the hand of administration the most rarely possible.

FROM this time my subject contracts itself, and presents no longer a spacious view to thought.

HERE, even, would the man stop, who wrote for vain glory. Content to have shewn the inconveniences in the perfect liberty of the commerce of corn, and to have laid open the insufficiency and the danger of the principles on which it is founded; he would leave it undetermined, whether he knew or not the means which would preserve from the
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the abuses he has described, and whether he can point out a proper road through so many difficulties. But when a man directs his eyes upon the vast subjects of political oeconomy; when he meditates on those which seem to appertain essentially to the welfare of mankind, the interest of his vanity, the calculating his little reputation, appear so paultry, that he would blush to sacrifice the greatest trifle to it. It is no longer then the pusillanimous counsels of vanity that he wishes to obey; it is to the desire, to the pleasing hope of being useful, that he loves to resign himself.

LET us first in our researches, reject every absolute law; it can never subsist long; and when we would cure the inconveniences which attend it by a second law equally absolute, we fall into other abuses.

SUPPOSE a happy plenty, or an excessive love for liberty in political oeconomy, produces a determination to impose no limit on the commerce of
corn,

corn, and that every one embarks in this commerce according to his fancy; a time will come, when the inconsiderate speculations of merchants, high prices, popular commotions, fears of a dearth, will command the government to abrogate that law. If that which succeeds it proscribes this liberty totally, or subjects it to restraints which are tantamount; the commerce of corn, already odious in the public opinion, ceases altogether; the government is obliged to intervene, and to send supplies to every quarter; the circulation being thus stoppt at home and abroad, if there comes good crops the superfluity accumulates, the prices drop considerably, tillage is not so brisk, the proprietors declare it is ruined, all the cry is Liberty, the former law is re-established; once more it is abused, once more it is altered, and a continual succession of absolute and contradictory laws, supported by principles always invariable, and always different, govern France,

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in the face of all Europe, which looks on with amazement.

THESE remarks are drawn from experience; all the new laws on corn have almost always been promulgated, when the abuses attending regulations absolutely contrary were risen to excess. The French imagination, which makes infants appear ages, looked on these abuses as if they were to last for ever; and the government carried away by the same spirit, destined laws for ages, which were expedient only for infants; and called irrevocable and perpetual, that which was necessarily to be changed in other circumstances.

EVEN these variations would have been still more frequent, had not the promoter of the reigning law had, as minister, the power of remedying by particular orders, the inconveniences which he perceived; and had not the merchants often found permission, where prohibition was stuck up, and restraint, where the law had proclaimed liberty.

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I APPREHEND then that a law on the commerce of corn cannot be permanent but so far as it is sagely modified; it is on that condition only, that it can be adapted to all circumstances.

It is unfortunate, to be sure, for this work, that reason and truth do not allow it to recommend a simple and absolute law; modifications of all kinds displease men, not only because they oblige them to combine, when they would wish only to retain, but likewise because these modifications seem to indicate timidity, weakness, and indecision.

BUT it seems to me that there are two kinds of modifications, which it is very requisite to distinguish.

THE one, which belong to theory, through doubt and uncertainty weaken the resolution and intention, stop action, and render the end proposed obscure, by dividing it.

THE others, which belong to practice, only represent the combination
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of means which may attain to this end; they are small dispersed forces, but reunited towards one sole point to augment their power, and render their success more certain.

It behoves then, that firm and decided principles be the fruit of reflection.

It behoves that a frank and open exposition attest a purity of intention, and a simplicity of character.

It behoves that the circumsppection of the means announce the knowledge of the difficulties, and the desire to surmount them.

THESE are the several conditions we would have wished to fulfil.

THUS we have endeavoured first to know and to mark out positively the end which should be aimed at, in the administration of corn. In searching afterwards for the surest road to arrive at it, we have thought we perceived that laws of precautions wisely modified, were the most proper, and we have

not hesitated to prefer them to the false glare of those bold expedients, which spring rather from a blind confidence than from a well-enlightened courage.

THERE are quacks in all sciences and in all projects; they think they can persuade men of the clearness of their ideas, by the simplicity of their means, and of the grandeur of their views, by the rashness of their resources. Sometimes even, the more unsteady they are in their designs, in their judgements, in their courage, in their knowledge, the more assurance and the more facility they affect. They are tormented with the consciousness of their weakness, and they seek to impose upon others and to deceive themselves.

IF a man is terrified at the labours of an *Aristotle* or of a *Buffon*, he subjects the effects of nature to two or three general combinations, and rejects all modifications, with as much confidence as if he had studied them all. If a man is incapable of understanding
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the anatomy of the human body, and of critically observing the various maladies to which it is liable, he proposes an elixir which shall cure all diseases. If he has no opinion of his own in public matters, he raises his voice, or he pronounces positively, when he repeats that of another man. If he understands nothing of the difficulties of the finances, he recommends a paper money, or a sole tax; and if he is not willing to be at the trouble of studying the abstract principles of political oeconomy, he preaches up absolute liberty, or absolute prohibition.

By the help of this art invented by ambitious vanity, they sometimes give their ideas an air of grandeur which imposes on the world. But it is especially in the question of corn that we must be on our guard against this glaring weakness. We must renounce employing our thoughts on the welfare of the people, we must cease to interest ourselves in the maintenance of internal

tranquillity, and in the prosperity of the state, or we must fix our meditation between these two extremes, constant prohibition, and constant liberty: the language which expresses with energy only simple notions or striking objects; and the laziness of mind which pleases itself with that manner, are so many obstacles which must be overcome: but whatever dislike we may know men to have for all the ideas which are represented by the words *except, so far as, sometimes*, and so many other dim and faint expressions, which offer no hold to the attention, we must dare to keep humbly to these bounded ideas, when we think that the greatest interests of a nation may depend on them, and above all, when at the bottom of our hearts, they are the only images of truth.

CHAP. II.

Result on Exportation.

OF all the laws which have hitherto occupied our meditation, the most fatal, without dispute, would be that which should permit the free exportation of corn at all times; to me it appears incompatible with the population of France, with its wealth, its government, and its manners. Unless there should happen some extraordinary and unfortunate events which should diminish the number of its inhabitants, such a law will never subsist there for any length of time: its duration would always depend on the quantity of surplus which should be accumulated in the kingdom, either by extraordinary crops, or by prohibitions too long and too absolute.

BUT if we have discovered that the constant liberty of exporting corn was infinitely dangerous to France, we have

at the same time proved that such a liberty was never necessary to such a kingdom. Her situation, the productions of every kind which are peculiar to her soil, those of her colonies, the industry of her inhabitants, the perfection of the arts which they cultivate, and the union of a thousand circumstances which attract foreigners and their money, offer, in that happy country, the greatest variety of objects of exchange to the proprietors of subsistence; thus the general motives which encourage agriculture will never be wanting there. Its success can never be hurt but by faults of administration; and even *they* will often be unable to withstand the benefits of nature. But that which requires much care, that which becomes more and more important to France, is to keep up her great population; it is to secure to the twenty-four millions of men which now compose it, the necessaries of life which the earth produces; it is, in fine, to prevent

prevent the starts in prices which trouble the public tranquillity, which plunge into anxiety, unhappiness, or distress, that numerous part of the nation, who live by the labour of their hands.

I AM of opinion then, that in a country such as France, the prohibition to export corn ought to be fundamental law.

BUT at the same time, I think that this prohibition ought not to be absolute; that is to say, that the *same law* ought to declare the instant of the exception. For as we have already desired it to be observed, it would be an inconvenient imprudence to tie ourselves up never to suffer any corn to go out; it would be to renounce perhaps making an advantage of plenty, by not allowing the means of exchanging a superfluous and perishable commodity, either against other goods more or less perishable, or against permanent riches, such as gold and silver. It would, in fine, occasion an extraordinary fall in
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the prices, by the accumulation of a great superfluity, and as this fall would not fail to produce at last the liberty of exportation, to that cheapness would succeed a rapid rise, and these convulsions would hurt the happiness of the people, and would destroy the general harmony, by discontenting successively all the different classes of the community.

LET us now see what should, in my eyes, be the permanent conditions which might be chosen, in order to approach to that aim which we ought to propose to ourselves.

I FIRST present those conditions in a succinct manner, reserving to myself the liberty of explaining them separately in the following chapters, when I give an account of my motives in that respect.

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CONDITIONS.

TO suffer only flour to be exported.

To permit that exportation only when corn should be fallen to twenty livres the septier, or lower, in the two preceeding markets, in the places of the exportation.

To establish this law only for ten years.

To ordain that there shall be a moderate provision in the hands of the bakers from the first of February to the first of June, as shall be hereafter explained.

To permit under all circumstances the exportation of corn imported from foreign parts.

C H A P. III.

*On the Conditions proposed, relative to
Exportation.*

I DO readily agree that the price of corn is not an incontestible proof of the existence of a surplus, but it is however the least imperfect indication. We would only have very vague and uncertain grounds, by comparing the knowledge we might obtain of the crops, with those we might have concerning population; such researches would necessarily expose us to considerable errors; and as such a calculation could be set on foot and carried on by administration only; if that was to be made the rule for the freedom or the prohibition of the exportation, all law would from thence forward become useless; which would be another source of inconveniences. Besides, the æra of a low price is always that which must be chosen to permit an exportation, in
order

order not to have against you the public opinion and the complaints of the people; and it is also the æra at which the interest of the proprietors necessarily requires this exportation; but to permit it, we must not wait till the prices are too low, for by so doing, we should not prevent the injury which too great a fall does to the possessors of land, and yet we disturb the lot of the people, and make their minds uneasy, when, after having accustomed them a long time to a very low price, we give occasion for a considerable rise.

I now proceed to lay open upon what principles I have proposed the price of twenty livres the septier for the æra of exportation.

It is obvious that the fixing such a limit can never be either defended or criticized with precision; that is to say, that when we chuse twenty livres, it would be difficult to demonstrate why nineteen or one and twenty would not be as expedient.

BUT

BUT first I perceived, on considering the general prices of corn in Europe, that if the average price of this article in France was from three to four and twenty livres the septier, this kingdom might preserve her superiority in the commerce of manufactures *; it appeared to me at the same time, that this price was very beneficial to the proprietors of land, and very sufficient to stir up agriculture as much as possible; granting besides for breaking up ground, the peculiar encouragements which might appear reasonable.

WHEN I was satisfied of this, I considered what was the most proper proportion between the price which ought to be desired for a constancy, and the

* This must depend then on something besides the cheapness of corn, for 24 livres the septier is \approx 1 l. 18s. 5d. sterling per quarter standard measure; and the average price of Europe, according to Mr. de la Chalotais, is only 20 livres the septier, or 1 l. 12s. per quarter; and the average price in England from 1706 to 1765, a period of 59 years, was (by Smith's Tables) 1 l. 12s. 4d. per quarter. The

limit which ought to be established for exportation.

I FOUND that this limit ought to be inferior to the price, which was looked on as the most favourable to the general harmony; because it is natural that the average price be constantly above that fixt for exportation; seeing that the moment the price falls to that limit, a very moderate exportation is often sufficient to carry off that part of the surplus which had fallen the prices, and to make them rise sensibly, as we have had occasion to lay open: for we must never lose sight of this, that the quantities of corn exported from a country, do not affect the price in proportion to the relation they bear to the general mass of corn existing in that country, but in proportion to the relation they bear to that precious surplus which moderates the power of the sellers over the buyers.

It cannot be exactly known what is the amount of this surplus necessary to maintain a reasonable equilibre between
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the contracting parties ; but we know, notwithstanding, by experience, the truth of the proposition which I advance on this head. Examine what prodigious effects very moderate exportations have had on the prices, divers times, and in divers kingdoms ; observe what passed in the states of Austria about six months ago (i. e. in 1774) in consequence of an exportation from Trieste ; in Italy, in Sicily, and in the Levant ; in several circumstances ; finally, remark what was the rise of corn in France between the years 1764 and 1768, during a liberty of exportation, which, nevertheless, came after a long prohibition ; and you will easily believe, that the smallest exportation is sometimes sufficient to raise the price of corn sensibly, and that therefore the limit of exportation ought to be at a certain degree below the price desired to be constantly kept up in a state.

It cannot be exactly known what is the amount of this surplus necessary to maintain a steady price between

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I HAVE, however, started an objection beforehand * to the limit which I propose, alledging that it was subjecting ourselves voluntarily to sell for twenty livres, a commodity for which foreigners would perhaps have given five and twenty, if it had been allowed to be exported at that price.

By this argument, it may also be required that the limit should be carried to thirty livres; but must we sacrifice, to a *possible* gain of money, the general motives of order, of happiness, and of tranquillity? Are not these the best sureties for wealth, in such a country as France, which attracts the precious metals in so many different manners? But it is time to add, that this pretended gain would be truly fallacious; for, in order to sell at a higher price, the small quantity of corn which the kingdom might possibly export, we must expose ourselves to the danger of raising constantly in France the price of time and

* Part iii. ch. 3.

of labour, and of losing thus much more, by the various obstacles this would put to the national manufactures. Nor is this all; should France permit the exportation only at twenty livres, still she would receive *more* from other nations, as she would also enjoy the profit which the French sailors and French merchants would make, the one by the freight, and the other by the sale of this corn in foreign nations:

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THERE might be still another means of procuring a greater sum of money to France for the sales she should make abroad, without advancing the limit of exportation. This would be to permit the exportation of flour only; then foreigners would have to pay, besides the price of the corn, the expence of grinding, and the profits which the several agents in those kinds of operations would make. These objects all together might
perhaps

perhaps augment the price of the septier from three to four livres to the profit of France. However, as the foreigners are obliged to pay at home, part of these expences, when they buy corn, the law which permitted the exportation of flour only, would not prevent foreigners from providing themselves in France, and so much the more, because at the times this exportation would be allowed, the prices would be low, and would probably suit the different speculators in Europe. Moreover, there would appear to me an essential expediency in the obligation to export flour only, which is that it would engage us to a sort of measure and slowness which might often be salutary. Suppose, for instance, that a hundred thousand septiers could be exported at one time, if the corn unground might be sent, whilst the exportations must be divided into quantities of twenty thousand septiers each, if the corn must indispensably be first converted into flour or meal; it would re-

sult from this last condition, that when the sending out twenty thousand septiers would be sufficient to raise the prices, we should not be exposed to an exportation of a hundred thousand; so that the prices would always be kept up by the smallest possible exportation. This ought to be the aim of sound policy, inasmuch as the exportation of corn is never desirable, but only in order to secure at all times to the proprietors a sale for their corn at a reasonable price*.

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THE law of 1764, ordained that whenever corn should during three market days be at thirty livres the septier, the exportation should stop till new orders from administration. This condition

* There is another peculiar advantage in the commerce of flour, which is, that the best is made with corn of different qualities; whereas generally only the best corn, and what is able to bear the freight, is sent out.

condition became prudent in a law which extended the liberty too far; but it would not appear necessary, if the moderate limit we propose was adopted. Thus when the price should be fallen to twenty livres the septier, during two market days, the exportation should be left free, and not stopt till the price should rise above it for two following market days also, and it would be again permitted when the price should again fall during two other market days to the established limit*; so that the law providing

* These regulations for opening and shutting the ports, are the same with those enacted by our stat. 13 G. 3. c. 63. and 14 G. 3. c. 64. only *here*, the price must be under the limit during two market days; with us, only one; here, there is never any bounty at any price, and at 20 livres per septier, = 1 l. 12 s. per quarter, or 4 s. per bushel, all exportation stops; with us, there is a bounty of 5 s. per quarter, (which is from above eleven to sixteen per cent.) till the price rises to 44 s. per quarter, or 5 s. 6 d. per bushel, or 27 livres 5 sols the septier, and then exportation is prohibited: so that there is no period, be the price high, or be it low, when corn can be exported without receiving a premium

providing constantly for the possibility of a successive variation in the prices, it would

of about 25 s. per ton ; much more, it is presumed, than freight and charges. It will not be easy to reconcile this to the ideas of foreigners. They say, if corn is cheap, there is no need of a bounty, it will be exported without it ; if it is dear, so far from encouraging exportation, it should be prohibited : if you fix a medium price, to which when it rises, the bounty shall begin, say 32 s. per quarter, it is more profitable for the merchant to pay 32 s. and receive a bounty of 5 s. than to pay only 31 s. 30 s. 29 s. or 28 s. and to receive no bounty ; he will therefore raise the price from either of these lower, to the higher rate. The merchant can sell cheaper in many foreign markets than he actually buys in England, and yet make great gains, thus :

Dr.	Merchant :	Per Con.	Cr.
		l.	l.
To 100 load (ton) sold	} 750	By 100 load, bot.	} 800
at 7 l. 10 s. per load		at 8 l. per load	
To bounty, at 5 s. per	} 125	By balance - -	75
quarter - - - -			
	875		875

Suppose freight and charges amount to 25 or 35 l. there remains a profit to the merchant of 40 or 50 l. on his 800 l. that is 5 l. or 6 l. 5 s. per cent. and this in two months, one month, or a fortnight perhaps, which may be cent. per cent. per ann. ; and the Dutchman or the Frenchman is set fix per cent. cheaper

would never be necessary to have recourse to administration for new orders, and thus to stop the course of commerce.

cheaper than the Englishman. Thus the effect of the bounty is to keep corn constantly at a higher price in England, than it is at in foreign countries; therefore your bounty laws are pernicious: for supposing, not granting, that the spur given to agriculture by the bounty has been the cause that corn has been cheaper since that æra than it was before; yet this is nothing to the purpose, for it matters not to a nation, considered separately, and without any relation to other nations, what the price of corn is, what quantity of silver shall be exchanged against a quantity of corn, (provided it be permanent, and there is a sufficient quantity to carry on the circulation;) the national advantage is only this, that its inhabitants may be fed cheaper than foreigners, whereby they may be enabled to work cheaper, and by selling cheaper to carry away the trade from their rivals. It were better for England that corn was there at 2 l. 16 s. per quarter, as it was on an average in 1649, 1650, 1651, and 1652, provided it should be at 3 l. 13 s. 6 d. per septier in France, as it was during these years, than that it should be at 1 l. 12 s. in England, if it is at 18 livres the septier in France at the same time. Your bounty has an effect directly contrary to this advantage; therefore your bounty laws are pernicious to your own welfare.—What answer is to be given to this, I must leave to others to determine.

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I do not doubt but that these conditions will sometimes be abused, and that it will be possible, by some manœuvres, to fall the price of corn on the frontiers, in order to meet no obstacle to the exportation proposed; but I have reckoned on these abuses, and I estimate them as an encrease of one livre on the limit of exportation, that is to say, had it not been for the chance of such abuses, which cannot be prevented, I should perhaps have proposed to settle the liberty of exportation at one and twenty livres, instead of twenty, as I have done. It seems to me, that in laws of this nature we ought always to take room enough, so that an exact observance may never be essential to the public welfare; in order to prevent as much as possible any occasion for minute enquiries, which spread an uneasiness.

MOREOVER, as long as flour and meal only are allowed to be exported, the small degree of delay which this condition would give to the operations of the

the merchants, would probably prevent part of the abuses which may be feared.

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I AM of opinion that every ten years the several limits to which the commerce of corn in general is subjected, ought to be examined anew; because, in that space of time, the encrease of money in Europe, or unforeseen events, may change in a sensible manner the proportions which subsist at present between the essential circumstances which compose the social order.

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I SHALL end with a general observation, which appears to me reasonable and important.

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It is, that in determining a limit for exportation, it is better to run the risk of its being a little too low than too high, because there is no proportion between the danger of a needless prohibition, and that of an imprudent exportation; a prohibition can always be remedied, when experience advises it; whereas we may figure to ourselves such a circumstance, wherein a precipitate exportation might produce evils, that no human power could remedy.

NOR must we ever forget that since it is impossible to prevent the fluctuation of prices, it is always much better that the transient alteration be to the profit of the people, than to the advantage of the proprietors; that is to say, that if twenty-four livres was the desirable price, it would be more conformable to the public good, that the starts should be from twenty-four to twenty livres, than from twenty-four to thirty; inasmuch as in this last supposition, it is the man who lives by

the labour of his hands that bears the burthen of the variation; whereas in the tranſient fall from twenty-four to twenty livres, it is the proprietor who loſes ſome means of luxury or of conveniencey.

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HERE methinks, I hear it ſaid, We ought never to wiſh the conſtancy of ſuch or ſuch a price; we ſhould not propoſe any to ourſelves; there is no price expedient, but that which is brought about by circumſtances and by liberty.

BUT this liberty is only the permiſſion given to the proprietors to diſplay their whole power; and if the ſocial laws reſtrain all liberty which is contrary to public order, why ſhould not they have the right to temper the greateſt abuſe that can be made of it? If an inconfiderate exportation may for a time
double

double the price of corn, and occasion greater evils likewise, can there be any greater violence towards the multitude?

YET it has been several times alledged, that the people were gainers by a rise of price, because the proprietor having then a greater revenue, he spent more. If corn is worth twenty livres, has it been said, the lands of France will bring in only a thousand millions, and if it is worth thirty livres, the same lands will bring in fifteen hundred millions. So here is five hundred millions more which the proprietors will spend, and it is the people that will reap the benefit of it.

AFTER all that I have already said, may I not be dispensed from answering this argument?

Is it not visible that these fifteen hundred millions, produced by the rise of corn, would be of no more value to the proprietors than one thousand millions, if taxes, labour, and all the other objects of exchange rose in proportion?

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Is it not clear that this augmentation of fortune for the proprietors of corn, is composed only of the diminution of that of the other members of the community? It is the general harmony which is deranged, and that is all; for there are not five hundred millions worth of new goods fallen down from the heavens or sprung out of the earth.

IF a man has not this simple truth engraven on his mind, he will be incessantly tossed about by the most empty reasonings on the pretended gains of the community, which are nothing else but a momentary conquest gained by one class of that community over the lot of the others ||.

|| It is on principles absolutely contrary to those which I advance, that those famous calculations of the *net produce* are founded, so celebrated in the works of the oeconomic writers. We cannot too much applaud the pure and well-known zeal of those most worthy persons, who distinguish themselves by their attachment to those opinions, and we pay them a sincere homage; but we think we may permit ourselves to make some observations on a subject of so great importance.

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I SAW first that they had sought under different relations, what was the gain of the proprietor, after the payment of imposts and of the expences of culture; they have found it; they have named this gain, the *net produce*; very well: hitherto no new light was discovered; but here it is that one of the essential reasonings begins, and in the sequel of it, a theory which does not to me appear just.

They have found that corn sold, say, at twenty livres the septier, gave so much gain or *net produce*; and they said, if the price rises to five and twenty or thirty livres, the *net produce* will instantly be augmented by such a sum.

This augmentation applicable to all the lands in the kingdom will make several hundred millions of encrease, in the general *net produce*.

Thus the dearer corn shall be, the more the *net produce* will encrease, and the more the national wealth will be considerable.

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BUT we have already shewn that this way of judging of the wealth of a country was absolutely erroneous. If making a septier of corn be called forty livres instead of twenty was sufficient to render the kingdom twice as rich; the monopolists would be the most respectable supporters of the prosperity of a state, an exportation without measure and without limit would become the most sublime combination

bination in administration, and a scanty crop would be the greatest blessing we could receive from providence. Let no one think that I exaggerate in this consequence. I will try to render this proposition sensible by a very simple calculation, which will perhaps throw a new light on this matter.

LET us suppose that the annual consumption of France may be forty-eight millions of septiers.

Let us further suppose that there ought to be a surplus of four millions of septiers in the proprietors hands, to keep the balance between the needs of the buyers and of the sellers, and to establish a reasonable price, say, twenty livres the septier, for wheat and other grain one with another.

As long as these proportions subsist, the proprietors sell or consume every year forty-eight millions of septiers, which at twenty livres make nine hundred and sixty millions, and there remains in their hands four millions of septiers unsold, which serve every year to temper their power, and to maintain the desired price.

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LET us now suppose, that the scantiness of the crops makes an essential part of this precious surplus disappear; then the strength of the proprietors, and the anxiety of the consumers, are so augmented, that the forty-eight millions of septiers are sold at thirty-six, and perhaps at forty livres.

Thus,

Thus, this year when we have received less from the earth, the corn sold or consumed by the proprietors has been represented by a numerary sum twice as great as in the former years.

Will they imagine, in that case, that the state has gained nine hundred and sixty millions? Will they put any confidence in such calculations, which are productive only in proportion to the sterility of the ground, or to the errors of the government? Surely not.

Let them tell us that the population of a state augments, that real riches are accumulated in it; we shall see in these circumstances the encrease of its prosperity; but that interior arithmetic, which makes high prices wealth, is of all measures the most false and the most deceitful,

CHAP.

C H A P. IV.

*On the Utility of a moderate Provision in
Towns during Part of the Year.*

I HAVE separated this proposition from those which I have treated generally in the preceding chapter, because at the same time that it is relative to the precautions necessary in times of exportation, it presents also an important safeguard against the abuses which may arise from the interior liberty.

ALL hazards are dreadful in matters of subsistence: thus, whenever a certain extent is given to the liberty of this commerce, to me it appears essential, that there be in the towns and large villages, a provision of corn sufficient to defend them against unforeseen events, or against a continual anxiety.

THIS provision may be made in different manners, but the intervention of the bakers to me seems the best; their purchases, which are very much divided,

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would

would become imperceptible, and these people would always be the best guardians, seeing it is their trade, and that each of them would have but a small quantity under his care.

As the extent of the abilities and of the commerce of the bakers is not uniform throughout the kingdom, nor even in the towns, the justest repartition, I think, would be to require from them a provision equivalent to their vent during a month, with a proviso that this quantity might be still augmented in the sequel, as experience should advise.

THE bakers have already, for the most part, a provision more or less strong, or more or less habitual; all that would be requisite then would be to increase it, or to render it more certain and more general; they might procure it almost without any capital, and on the mere credit they would get from the proprietors and the farmers, as this provision would not be of long duration.

WE apprehend it would be necessary only from the first of February to the first

first of June, in those climates of France where the harvest is in July, and so in proportion in the southern provinces; and these are my motives.

THE period when corn is cheapest in the greatest part of the kingdom, is from the beginning of November to the end of January. It is therefore to invite the bakers to form their provision during that interval, that I point out the first of February as the æra when that provision required should exist; it is important that this provision be made in the time of year when corn is cheapest, not only for the advantage of the bakers, but likewise to endeavour to prevent exportation, by thus keeping up the price, in the months wherein the fall commonly happens.

I FURTHER think, that at the first of June the bakers ought to be at liberty to dispose of this provision as they please, seeing that then the gradual sale of this same provision, and soon after, the plenty of new corn, would be per-

fectly sufficient to guard against all anxiety; and it seems to me reasonable to avoid any constant hoard of corn unnecessarily, as it is a capital rendered useless, and even a means of raising the price of corn; but the provisions which I have now indicated would not stop the circulation; and as they would keep up the price of corn at the period of plenty, and would moderate it at the period of scarcity, they would effectually contribute to that equality which is so much to be desired.

HOWEVER this may be, this provision thus reduced both in point of time, and in point of quantity, ought not to raise the price of bread; the more so, because it is probable the bakers would not lose by this arrangement, as they would make their purchases in the time of the year when corn is cheapest, and that they would sell it again at the period when it is commonly at the highest price. Besides, it would be very easy to procure them some indemnification either
on

on their expences of reception, or on the other imposts wherewith they are charged, if their profits should not be sufficient.

BUT, in fine, let us suppose that this temporary provision required of them, was to be looked upon as entirely an encrease of charge upon them, which cannot be, since they have already for the most part a habitual provision more or less considerable. Let us also suppose, that there was no other way of indemnifying them but by augmenting the price of bread, it is fit to make it appear that such an object would be almost imperceptible.

IN the plan which we have proposed, the bakers would be required to be furnished with a provision equal to their vent in a month, during four months, from the first of February to the first of June; but as some of the bakers would buy earlier, or sell later, than the periods named, I will calculate on a disburse of five months on their part.

Now this disburse of five months on the twelfth part of the yearly rent, would amount, at the rate of six per cent. per annum, to a four hundred and eightieth part of the total vent; it is then by this four hundred and eightieth part that the price of bread ought to be raised to indemnify the bakers; which would be the sixtieth part of half a farthing in a penny loaf weighing a pound.

THE price of a pound of bread could not be raised the sixtieth part of a *liard*, (i. e. half a farthing) as that subdivision is impracticable; but as that augmentation on the sale of the whole year is equal to an augmentation of a *liard* on the sale of six days, we might, pursuing this calculation, say, that to indemnify the bakers for the provision required to be made by them, it would be sufficient annually to postpone for six days the first diminution of a *liard*, which would come to be made on the price of bread. Thus it appears how easy the
salutary

salutary precaution proposed would be, and how little it would cost.

I KNOW well that this precaution would not be general, because in the country there are few bakers, and in several towns they serve only part of the inhabitants with bread; but wherever the bakers carry on no trade, it is a proof that the families make their bread themselves, and this obliges them to lay in a quantity of corn, great or small, and in this manner the same end is answered.

MOREOVER, in places where any other method of laying up a provision might be employed, it might be conformed to till the plan proposed was adopted; the essential is to have, in these moderate provisions, a security against any unforeseen and momentary crisis, and a resource which prevents the necessity of causing the markets to be furnished, at any time, by arbitrary orders.

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I HAVE still a general observation to answer.

THESE provisions, say they, are they not dangerous? Will they not stop commerce? Will they not diminish it, at least?

COMMERCE is a general word, of which men often form an erroneous idea; one would imagine it was enough to buy and sell a great deal to make a country prosper, but various operations of this kind *may* be hurtful to the community.

FOR example, we may consider as such, all speculations formed when corn is at a reasonable price, with a view of making an advantage of the improvidence of men, and the moments of distress which it occasions. Thus, though such speculations may be prevented by the provisions I have already mentioned, it is not an inconvenience but a public benefit.

THESE moderate and transitory provisions made to defend the community
in

in general against unforeseen events, will still leave room enough for commerce; but if they are so fond of that word, why should they not look on the provisions we advise, as operations of that kind, and on the bakers who are charged with them, as merchants?

IN a word, as soon as these regulations of precaution should become general throughout the kingdom, the effect which they might have on prices would be uniform and constant, and the merchants would at all times direct their enterprizes in consequence.

CERTAINLY, the more incertitude and hazard of loss or gain there shall be, the more traffic there will be; but why should we entrust what can be otherwise secured, to that manner which is always uncertain?

MEN do not well know what they would say, when they repeat like eccho's, that we must take care not to lessen commerce; without doubt we must not stop the communications nor carriage;
but

but if the needs which gave room to them are prevented, why should we regret a commerce, which was only useful as it provided for those needs? We must not prevent the assistance of physicians; but if by a good regimen we can do without them, we shall have done very well.

IF several kinds of works and productions, which we draw from foreign countries, could be made or produced in France, that part of foreign commerce would be destroyed, and France would be a gainer by it in several respects.

So, if several manufactures, which are now entirely contracted in some parts of the kingdom, could be divided equally among all the provinces, a multitude of branches of commerce would exist no longer; and yet it would be an advantage to the state, as all the men and all the animals destined to this circulation, might be employed in productive labours.

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THESE observations are yet more strongly applicable to the commerce of subsistence.

IF we stop its action by obstacles we hurt the community; but we serve it, if we diminish the necessity of this commerce, by preventing the frequency of needs, by prudent laws and habitual precautions.

WE must never forget that *commerce is not the end, but the means*, and that this means is susceptible of different modifications.

AGRICULTURE, manufacture, and commerce, are the three sources of the prosperity of a state; but the laws of their movement are not the same; the repeated toils of the labourer assist the fertility of the earth; the continual and various works of manufacturers augment the quantity and value of our store; but the merchants, who are only the agents between the needs and the productions, may be as serviceable to the state by the regularity and simplicity

city of their operations, as by the number and extent of their enterprizes.

THE several remarks I have just now made are sufficiently important, and deserve perhaps some attention. Men experience with regard to the word, *Commerce*, that which has always happened with those *vast* words in language, to which they annex, as constant, the idea which belongs to them most frequently. Such are in political oeconomy, besides the term *commerce*, those of *labour*, *money*, *high price*, *agriculture*, *liberty*, and many more besides.

A MULTITUDE of errors depend on the too extensive sense attributed to those different expressions.

IF money is a species of riches which all men as individuals have good reason to pursue after, because goods and labour of all kinds are daily estimated by that standard, it is made the sole object of emulation between political societies, though, with regard to *them*, the effect of money is not the same.

IF the high price of corn augments the momentary gain of the proprietors of land, this circumstance is represented as a condition absolutely necessary to the progress of agriculture.

IF this agriculture is the first source of productions, it must be the *sole* object of the sollicitude of the state.

IF the liberty of commerce is the wish of every merchant, taken singly, it is made an oeconomical religion, and it is not remarked that liberty being only an encouragement, it cannot be a *good*, when it is applied to branches of commerce hurtful to the community.

IN a word, commerce carries on the exchanges, and in that relation it is become the most essential bond between men, and the means to satisfy all their different needs; but to make that *means* an *end*, that is to say, to multiply the necessity of exchanges in order to encrease commerce, is an evident error.

THE commerce of substances in the kingdom of France, is the most unbounded

bounded career for gaming, that can be entered upon. If it was possible that public opinion and the law could agree to render this commerce perfectly free, and independant of all sorts of precautions, I should not be surprized, if the greatest part of the capitals circulating in France should be destined to take advantage of the agitations, which nature and the passions of men would stir up in the price of a commodity so necessary to life. If such operations should acquire our respect, under the name of commerce, it would be one of the greatest errors that the abuse of words could produce.

CHAP. V.

*On Corn brought from Foreign
Markets.*

THE re-exportation of corn imported, ought to be permitted at all times, and without any exception: We must obtain it for our money, when we have need of it; but to retain it by authority, is to drive away fresh succours, and to hurt ourselves.

THIS obvious truth has no need of being further laid open.

C H A P. VI.

Result. On the interior Commerce.

TRANSPORTING the superfluity to the place where it is needed, is a circulation absolutely necessary.

PURCHASES of corn made by mere speculators, and not destined to any particular place, may likewise be expedient for the community when corn is at a low price.

SUCH purchases may be fatal in the time of high prices.

THESE principles, which we have already laid open, seem now to point out our road to us.

WHILST corn has not attained the price to which it may rise without great inconveniences, the most entire liberty should be granted of buying and selling either at market or in the granaries; whether it is intended to be carried to another province, or to be sold again in the same place.

BUT

BUT as soon as it is risen to a high price, I would prevent all the rises which spring from the useless intervention of merchants; I would then bring the proprietors nearer together, by ordaining that, above such a price, it should not be sold except at market; and as a stop should likewise be put to the purchases which might be made in the market, on mere speculation, I would at the same price have it prohibited to buy without some destination, and solely with the design of selling again at a higher price afterwards.

IT would be sufficient, I imagine, that the price to which it should be allowed to buy and sell without any restriction, should be under thirty livres the septier; for I conceive it to be expedient to extend the liberty of the interior commerce as far as is possible without great danger.

MOREOVER, by prohibiting sales at thirty livres out of market, it is not only speculations at that price which

would be prevented; it is probable that long before the price was got up to that, the great purchases on speculation would be over: for as men desire to execute those kinds of enterprizes with facility, and consequently out of market, therefore as soon as they could not sell in that manner but below thirty livres, they would scarcely be tempted to make large purchases on speculation, at above five and twenty livres; and this check would be very conformable to the good of the community.

ON the other hand, the exaggerated pretensions of the farmers and proprietors would perhaps be prevented, both by their being obliged to carry the corn to market, when they would not sell under thirty livres, and by the general idea which would establish itself insensibly, that such a price was already in a manner reprobated by the public order; and nothing would be more fortunate for a country, vast and populous as France is, than a law, which, without

but constraint, but by the sole force of opinion, would stop excessive rises in the price of corn, and would fix, in a manner, between twenty and thirty livres the struggles of interest between the proprietors, the merchants, and the consumers. And would it be an illusion, to expect a happy influence from a law which would indicate the price where the suffering of the people would begin; which would seem to entrust to the general equity, the care of preventing any further deviation, and which would shew its paternal solicitude on this head, by the various obstacles which it would *then* oppose to a greater rise of price?

THE great inconveniency of the principles in favour of an indefinite liberty in the commerce of corn, when these principles are authorised and spread abroad by laws, is to fortify the idea, already too natural to every proprietor of corn, that there is no difference between the absolute necessities of life, and

any other property, and thus that no one deviates from the rules of social equity, by employing all his address, and availing himself of every circumstance, to sell these necessities as dear as possible, without knowing any other measure than his own power; yet we ought, on the contrary, to maintain and favour, as much as possible, the spirit of moderation, the only one expedient in the commerce of corn, and the only one dictated by the public order.

LET the law, let those who govern, recall to mens minds incessantly the force of property in general, nothing is more just or more praise-worthy; the most entire confidence, in the perfect independence of all we possess, cannot be too much kept up, because it cannot be too much respected. But amidst all the various species of property, there is one only, the feeling and consciousness of which must never be exaggerated, and that is the property of corn. We must
never

never suffer it to be out of our sight, that those who are masters of this commodity, whether as land owners, or as farmers, or as merchants, reunite in themselves both the general rights of property which set no bounds to their pretensions, and the duties annexed to the deposit of the necessary of life, which warns them to proportion the price of it to the abilities of the people, in order that political justice may never be infringed. All the laws, methinks, all the words of the sovereign, should bear the impress of these truths; whilst we grant to the prerogatives of property as much as is possible, we must never lose sight of the original claims of humanity; and it is easy to perceive that the combination of these two great principles, will never be the effect of an absolute and unlimited law.

I RETURN to the details of my subject: as long as the price of corn should be under the limit which should be determined, men might buy and sell as

they pleased; the more so, because by means of the provisions of precaution which I have advised, there would always be a safeguard against unforeseen accidents.

I LOOK on it as important that there should always be a great distance between the price limited for exportation, and that up to which the greatest facility should be enjoyed in speculations for the interior of the kingdom, in order that the money of rich men might be converted into granaries of abundance, as long as the prices are moderate.

IN fine, as soon as corn should be risen to the limit prescribed, and should have attained to a value which it would be dangerous to augment for the sole interest of speculators, the commerce of this commodity should be subjected to the laws of precaution, which we have pointed out.

YET I would still have it allowed to make purchases out of market, at all times, without any restriction of price, provided

provided those purchases were destined for another province, and that it was made known, either by a declaration, or by a request of pure formality, as might be judged most expedient.

THE distinction which I propose, to me seems wise; the intervention of merchants is useless for the most ordinary operations, such as the sale of corn in the neighbouring places; since the proprietors and farmers may themselves send their corn to market. Thus I banish this intervention, when corn is dear, as it would only make it dearer.

IN like manner I prevent in that case, with more reason, all purchases founded merely on speculation, and to sell again with gain at another time.

BUT when corn must be transported from the north to the south of France, merchants only can execute such enterprises, because they require capitals and intelligence; then all restraints, whereby the difficulty of their purchases and the amount of their expences would

be augmented, would be a burthen on the people of the province to which the corn is to be transported.

YET by means of these different precautions, which to me seem conformable to the good of the community, the merchants having no longer the power of making a bad use of liberty, the ideas of monopoly would be insensibly weakened; and the more the public opinion shall distinguish the useful merchant from the inconsiderate enterprizer, the more the commerce of corn will extend itself, in those circumstances where its activity becomes necessary to the good of the state. It is the frequent injustice of public judgements, which deters men who have a delicacy of feeling for opinion, from meddling at any time in this commerce; that of all others, however, which would have most need of being conducted by the wise, worthy, and delicate.

IN fine, we must either renounce regulating the commerce of corn by a permanent

permanent law, or it must impose reasonable limits; without this precaution we are constrained to correct an exaggerated prohibition by toleration, and an unlimited liberty by acts of authority, which stop, or which cramp it.

YET a toleration after a prohibition seems a kind of pardon; thus the agents of a commerce, to which this toleration is habitually applied, are forced to renounce the public esteem; and in all conditions of life, when men despair of obtaining it, they soon dispense with the care of deserving it, as they like to get free from a chain which does them no good.

ON the other hand, unexpected restrictions, or difficulties laid in their way, in a time of legal liberty, are sources of complaints and discouragement.

THUS, to protect the commerce of corn against the injustice of opinion, and the multiplied acts of authority, the process of it must be regulated by a

law, the principles whereof are constant, yet coincide with the variable order of things; by a law which, so cautiously contrived, may be applicable to all circumstances, and prevent the frequent intervention of administration; an intervention which never fails to draw on a number of inconveniences, because it has always an exaggerated impression on mens minds; all the unknown motives are magnified by the imagination; and it is thus that men commonly couple vast projects with the smallest steps of government, and the most lively alarms with its slightest precautions.

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OBJECTION.

WOULD it not be possible under pretence of sending corn to another part of the kingdom, to buy it up on speculation only? they need only have
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it put in warehouses in the province to which it is sent, instead of keeping it in that where it is bought, and by that trick, the operations which are represented as contrary to the public good, would not be entirely prevented.

It is impossible to put a stop to every abuse; but I shall only observe that purchases of corn on mere speculation are seldom made, but when it can be put in warehouses near the place where it is contracted for; because the buyers wish to have it in their power to dispose of it according to circumstances, and are cautious of raising the price of such a commodity, by the considerable expence of carriage, before they have determined its destination. Besides, if they remove the corn, they must pay the whole value of it; whereas when they buy to keep in the same place, they may amass a very large store with very little stock; since it is sufficient to pay a small part of the value to the proprietors, when they keep their commodity as a pledge; and

and this is what is called *giving earnest* for corn, a species of traffic very well known.

IN fine, there is a kind of national point of honour, which prevails in commerce as in all other stations, and the knowledge of this point of honour persuades me, that they would faithfully observe a law, which should prescribe the reasonable conditions, and conformable to the public good, which we have now pointed out.

BESIDES, even when they should deviate from them sometimes, the public interest would not be affected. The regulations on the commerce of corn in the interior of the kingdom are not laws of preservation, as those which concern the exportation of it. Thus, the essential is that there be a power, at all times, to act against abuses, in the name of the law; which could never be done, whilst it opposes a reasonable circulation, or allows an unlimited liberty; for in those cases it is the law itself which authorises the abuse.

LET

LET us suppose, for instance, that it had established an indefinite liberty; how could the operations of a merchant, who, in a time of apprehension or of scarcity, raised corn still higher for his own profit, and to the prejudice of the people, be *legally* repressed? Has not such merchant, like all other subjects, a right to claim the protection of the law?

IF it imposes, on the other hand, restraints equivalent to an interdiction of all liberty, who would dare to inflict punishment under it, on a disobedience, without which there would have been no circulation, and without which perhaps a whole province would have lived in distress, by the side of another which would have been overwhelmed with its superfluity?

WE may then sometimes wink at small deviations in the observation of a law; but it is nevertheless of the greatest importance, that this law should be reasonable, in such manner that the subject may risk
nothing

nothing in doing whatever it allows, nor the safety of the state be in danger, when nothing is done which it prohibits.

C H A P. VII.

On the Necessity of endeavouring at an Equality of Prices. Observations on the Duties payable at Markets.

TH E proprietors, who are the distributors of subsistence, will always give law to the men who cannot eat if they do not work; thus mere strength will never have any recompense but bare necessities, common manufacturers a little more, and particular talents still more; the lot of the people in general will never be altered, whatever may be the settled price of corn, because the proprietors will always regulate in consequence, that of workmanship.

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BUT the variations are a source of anxiety for the men who live by their labour. The land owners or their farmers may, in their calculations, establish an average price and balance one year against another; but an average *living* cannot be so formed; the present year and the next, to day and to morrow, are equations that cannot be propounded to a man alarmed for his subsistence.

IGNORANCE of, or inattention to, the relations the most essential to human nature, present strange contradictions in the heart of our towns. We there proscribe the excess of gaming, a general scandal is the consequence of it, and government is earnest to prevent it. Far be from me the thought of disapproving those cares, and this anxiety; but all those chances of fortune, which would transfer some means of luxury or of conveniency from one idle, useless, debauched, and wicked fellow (in this respect at least) to another; what are they in comparison of that vast and terrible

rible gaming, the effect of the rise of the price of subsistence? The most numerous part of a nation, in that, loses in an instant either their necessities of life or their quiet. We make ourselves easy on these misfortunes whilst they are obscure and domestic, because we must dare follow them into the disgusting habitations of indigence, and because we would not even afflict our imagination for an instant; it is only at the cries of sorrow, at the tumultuous noise of complaint, that our compassion is roused; but a long series of sufferings had preceded those public clamours, and more than one master of a family, impatient under his misfortunes, had yielded perhaps in secret to the pernicious counsels of his wretchedness.

It is not, without doubt, in the power of an administration to prevent all the alterations to which the price of corn is exposed. For crops are subject to revolutions, against which all human prudence is but weakness.

BUT

BUT such events are rare, and extraordinary rises are frequent. In the space of half a century, there is not imported into or exported out of France, but from ten to twenty millions worth annually; this object is two per cent. of the total consumption; it seems then that the interest of the proprietors would not require great variations in the prices, since they are in a situation to make the surplus of one year compensate the deficiency of another.

WHENCE then arise those frequent inequalities of 25, 50, and 100 per cent. which are found in the price of corn in the same interval? From the extraordinary power which the abuse of liberty gives, sometimes to the buyers, sometimes to the sellers, from the exaggerated interdictions, the changes of system, and several other circumstances which a wise administration may prevent.

GOOD laws have then a great influence on the maintenance of an equality in the prices, so valuable to the people; and

one part of the various precautions which we have recommended have a relation to this important end.

THOSE which are applicable to the exportation of corn, are intended to prevent too great a quantity being either carried off or accumulated of that surplus, whose measure determines the debasement or the exaggeration of prices.

THE provisions of corn, are a resource against the unforeseen effects of commerce.

THE obligation to make these provisions when prices are low, and the permission to sell them at the usual period of high prices, contribute likewise to this desirable equality.

ANOTHER means to contribute to it, is to prevent purchases on mere speculation, when corn is at a reasonable price; and yet to interpose no obstacle to the transporting corn from one province to another, in order that by this communication, the low prices in one part of the kingdom, and the high prices
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in another, may the more easily be brought upon a level.

IN times of dearneſs, government will temper all exceſſes, by ſeaſonably granting a bounty to thoſe who will bring corn from foreign countries, or by ordering purchaſes there, on their own account.

THIS precious equality may be ſtill further taken care of, even in minute circumſtances, by granting to the bakers, when corn is cheap, a larger profit than uſual, in order to have a right to reſtrain it, when prices riſe.

IN fine, to all theſe manners of maintaining an equality in the prices, I ſhall ſtill add one more, relative to the duties of the markets and metage.

THESE duties are taken either by the lords of the manors, by virtue of ancient grants, or by perſons who aſſiſt at meaſuring the corn, and who exact a retribution, much leſs in proportion to the utility of their functions, than as the annual intereſt of the purchaſe-

D d 2

money

money paid by them or their ancestors.

It matters not; all these duties in the hands of the persons who receive them, are a species of property as respectable as any other. They cannot be abolished, but on giving the owners a suitable indemnification, or on reimbursing them the capitals which they have paid, and which constitute the origin of their possession.

AN estimable author, ardent for the public good, hath lately wrote on the inconveniency of these duties, which he makes to amount annually to a receipt of eight millions.

I ADMIT this calculation, though it is disputed. All that belongs to my subject, is to make it appear, that in order to serve the people, it is perhaps much less important to abolish all those duties, than to adapt them, by a sage modification, to the maintenance of the equality of prices; and thus I reason on this head.

EVERY

EVERY impost abolished by the effect of a sage oeconomy, is always an advantage to a nation, because no body loves to yield up to the head of the state, the disposal of a part of his property, but in so far as this sacrifice is necessary to the general advantage, whereby he himself is a gainer.

If then any impost whatever is suppressed, by retrenching a useless expence, the sovereign ought always to be praised for it; but as there are a great number of necessary public expences, we ought not to criticize one impost in particular, but on comparing it tacitly with another.

Now on abolishing the market duties, justice will require an equivalent annuity to be assigned to the proprietors, and the fund for this annuity will be taken, either on ancient impositions, or on a new one which will be established.

LET us suppose now that this impost be on land, that of all others the most

D d 3 generally

generally approved; will there result from the replacement of the market duties by this tribute, or by any other, a relief of any kind to the proprietors or to the people? No, without doubt.

IT is perfectly equal to the proprietors to pay an impost on selling their corn or on reaping it; it is very indifferent to the men who live by the labour of their hands, whether it is by one or the other of these imposts, that the sovereign provides for the public expences.

WHAT then! is it not clear that if the proprietors have not the market duties to pay, they will sell their corn cheaper to the poor people, or will pay them more for their labour?

I HAVE already said, that it was indifferent to the proprietors to pay the market duties or an impost on land; but we must go further, and shew the spirit of property stript of all concealment.

THOUGH the market duties, or any other impost charged on the proprietors,
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may be moderated or even abolished, the lot of the people who live by the labour of their hands will not be rendered better.

IT is not in proportion to their wealth, nor to any principle of equity, that the proprietors fix the price of their corn, and that of the labour which is devoted to their use; it is in proportion to their strength, it is in proportion to the insuperable power which the possessors of subsistence have over the men without property. The land owner who reaps ten thousand septiers every year, desires to sell his corn as dear as the peasant who carries only a few bushels to market. The rich man who has three hundred thousand crowns a year, multiplies his expences, but is not willing to pay more for any thing than the subject the least favoured by fortune.

THUS, whether the proprietors dispose of the whole of their revenues, or whether they give a portion of them to the sovereign, who distributes them

again to other members of the community, the condition of the people who live by the labour of their hands will be always the same.

THUS we see that numerous class of mankind subjected to the same fate from one end of the earth to the other.

IN the temperate countries of Europe, the people have bread, because they cannot live without that aliment; in those where fruits and garden stuff can in part supply it, they are obliged to be contented with that.

IN the climates where good clothing is necessary to their preservation, their wages are proportioned to the necessity of feeding and of clothing themselves; but in southern countries, if the heat dispenses with this last precaution, the people are covered with rags, without being the better off as to their food.

IT has been calculated every where what is exactly necessary for them, in order to allot only that price to their labour;

labour; and in the midst of the treasures of Indostan, four or five sous a day is the wages of the people, because they need only rice, wherewith the country abounds.

WAS it possible that a nourishment should be discovered less agreeable than bread, but which could support the human body for eight and forty hours, the people would soon be constrained to eat but one day in two, even if they should prefer their ancient custom; the proprietors of subsistence making use of their power, and desiring to multiply the number of their servants, will always force the men who have neither property nor talent, to content themselves with bare necessities; such is the spirit of human nature, a spirit which the social laws have so well seconded.

ENGLAND is the country in the world where the condition of the people seems to be best: this happy circumstance cannot be attributed to the moderation

deration of the imposts, since they are more considerable, in proportion, there, than in any other country in Europe; we must rather seek for the cause of it in the nature of the government, which gives the people a degree of strength and of resistance, which has an influence on the price of their wages. In fine, in those parts of Switzerland where the sovereign levies no impost, but where the people are nothing; the men who live by their labour have not a more happy lot than elsewhere *, and yet

* In the parts of Switzerland where I have been, Berne, Fribourgh, Neuchatel, Soleure, Basle, the people are much better clothed and infinitely better lodged than in England; as to their food I cannot speak, nor what may be their general condition in other cantons, though there is no reason to suppose it different. One thing is observable, that in those countries where no impost is paid, all things are dearer than in France where imposts abound. Another thing, the Helvetic honesty, of which many form high notions, is not to be found in those cantons where I have been, I was even laughed at for enquiring after it; and I was well informed that it is still less to be found in the small democratic cantons;

yet the competition against them is diminished by the continual emigrations to foreign services.

THIS is enough to shew, that in no place doth the lot of the men without property, participate of the wealth which surrounds them; because the proprietors always sell their produce as dear as they can, and pay as little as possible for labour; and because they always extend the exercise of their power, even to the reducing to bare necessities, every man who cannot protect

cantons; so that Mr. Stanyan had good reason to say they had less sincerity than the world allows them. This may serve to moderate the passion, too fashionable in young, uninformed, and unthinking, though perhaps well intentioned, men, for republics; and on this occasion I cannot refrain from inserting an observation of Plutarch, who had certainly nothing to do with modern contests or interests. In the life of *Demetrius Poliorcetes* he says, *The true character of the temper of a popular state, is only a liberty for all persons to be slaves to the wild, arbitrary, and extravagant humours of a giddy, rash, and inconstant multitude of fools, managed by a set of more cunning knaves.* Tr.

test himself, by his skill or his talents, according to their degree.

BUT what results from these various reflections, with respect to market duties? It is this, that the pure and simple abolition of that impost would not change, as is alledged, the lot of the people who are interested in the low price of subsistence; or if they were affected by this concession made by the sovereign to the proprietors, it would only be during too short a space of time, to determine the vast and extensive views which ought to occupy a legislator.

BUT in the modification of these duties may be found a new means of contributing to the equality of prices, so necessary to that class of men who have nothing to stake on a chance.

I WOULD propose then, that granting to the possessors of those duties an indemnification to their satisfaction, they should give up this impost, whenever corn should be risen to a certain price ;

price ; thus all the petty duties which might hinder the proprietors from bringing their corn to market, would no longer subsist in the circumstances wherein it is particularly important that the markets may be furnished, in order that an apparent plenty may prevent the progress of anxiety ; and if this repurchase, which I have mentioned, should still be thought too much for government to pay, the same end may be attained, by permitting that those duties may be augmented, whenever corn is under a stipulated price ; provided that they shall not be taken, when corn shall be dearer : thus, without its costing any thing to government, a modification of those duties would be effected, which would contribute more to the happiness of that part of the people intended to be favoured, than even the abolition of that impost.

For there is a great truth which seems to me to be little remarked, which
is,

is, that the class of the nation which live by their labour, cannot feel the bounty of the sovereign, but in so far only as his benefits are momentary; for all uniform and constant gratuity in money, becomes always the prey of the proprietors. They are lions and defenceless animals living together; the share of *these* cannot be augmented, without deceiving the vigilance of *those*, and not leaving them time to dart on the others.

It is then from powerful motives, that I annex so great a degree of importance to the several precautions, whereby the people may be succoured in dear times. In the midst of the social laws, it is the only service that can be rendered to them; and since the excessive power of property cannot be stopped, care must be taken, at least, that the bare necessities *, which are become the eternal portion

* Mankind can never be better fed than they now are, since all the subsistence produced is consumed, but by two methods; one by procuring a greater produce from the earth, by a more improved or more extended

portion of the majority of mankind,
may not be subject to those terrible
shocks

extended cultivation, and from the sea by fishery ; or else by applying all the quantity produced, to the use of subsistence, instead of applying great part of it to luxury. Under the first head may be included the converting meadow and pasture into arable, which yields much the most sustenance, (though the other may give the greater *nett produce* to the proprietor.)

Under the second must be included spirits, and *much* beer, if not all ; for though beer may afford some sustenance, yet it is absolutely nothing when compared with bread : a man eating his fill of bread, and drinking nothing but water, would live, would be strong, would perhaps be fat ; a man drinking his fill of beer, and eating nothing, would neither be fat nor strong, nor would he live. This is a greater article than people are aware of ; the quantity of grain consumed in liquors, and some other articles, amounts to near two thirds of the grain employed in bread : so if all the former was made into bread, men would have five pounds instead of three ; and if only one half, (which surely might be spared) they would have four pounds instead of three. The contemplation of this made the famous Mr. *Evelyn* exclaim, above a century ago, that we drank our very bread-corn. I do not reckon for much (though something it is to be sure) the waste which is made by the high fare of the rich ; for, after all that may be said of the essence of ham, soups, sauces, and ragoo's, I much
question

shocks which the momentary rises of corn never fail to produce.

question whether a hundred plowmen do not consume almost as much subsistence as a hundred peers.

But, though mankind could *only thus* be better fed, yet their condition might be much mended in other respects, if the labour of all the labouring class, (or of a greater number of them than are now so employed) was applied to useful purposes instead of the service of luxury; if lacemakers, embroiderers, silk weavers, coachmakers, &c. &c. &c. footmen, excisemen, &c. those whom *my lord* employs in making pieces of water and improvements, &c. were all, or as many of them as you please, employed in making strong linen, coarse cloth, necessary household furniture, as beds, tables, chairs, chests, &c. in building houses, sinking wells, inclosing the yard, &c. the condition of the people would surely be much meliorated, and there would not be an ounce less of subsistence than there was before, so that all might be fed as well as before; nor would there be a guinea the less in England, as far as their present employment is for home consumption, either immediately, or in the foreign articles which we import in exchange for them, and which we consume at home, and this is at least ninety-nine parts in a hundred. If the man of 10,000l. a year, (which we will call equal to five hundred subsistances,) would content himself to retain but one hundred subsistances for his own use, (which would procure him *some* comforts) and would set four hundred persons at work, *on his own estate,*

C H A P. VIII.

On Times of Scarcity or of Dearness.

THIS we have sufficiently laid open, that government can never be indifferent about the price of bread. The sacrifices necessary to succour the people in times of scarcity or of dearth, are the most becoming employment to which the public money, and the power of establishing imposts can be put. Surely, it would be very astonishing, that, whilst the sovereign watches by his tribunals over the most trifling shocks of interest between the subjects, we should not reckon amongst his duties, the greatest of all objects of watchfulness, the care of keeping in harmony the two classes which divide society, and the sacred guardianship of the impre-

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scriptible

estate, on the improvements above hinted, what would, in a very few years, be the effect? amazing! Were all men to do the same, according to their several faculties, this earth would soon be a paradise indeed. Tr.

scriptible rights of human nature; rights often attacked by the exaggerated pretensions of the proprietors, and reclaimed by the people, when that they demand to live, and that they offer in exchange their strength and their labour.

THE amount of the sacrifices which ought to be made in times of dearth, and the manner of directing them, depend absolutely on circumstances; thus the law can prescribe nothing on that head; such objects are subjected by their nature to the wisdom of administration.

THE provisions which we have recommended would guard against a continual anxiety. Mere bounties granted to the merchants might sometimes be sufficient to excite them to bring corn from foreign countries, even when the prices abroad might not offer them any profit; but if the general dearthness is such, that the merchants espy too much danger in forming enterprizes, or if,
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fearing to be hardly thought of, they withdraw from that commerce, the government is obliged to act more directly, it chuses commissaries that may be relied on, it charges them to bring foreign supplies, it orders them to sell at such prices, and in such places, it prescribes to them the precautions fit to be observed in the present circumstances, it follows their operations, it protects, it defends, it rewards them.

IN fine, there are times of crisis, in which the circulation of corn becomes entirely an administration of police and of safety, and they would be guilty of a great fault if they obstinately persisted in such a situation to leave it to the interest of commerce. That interest is sufficient in ordinary times; the laws by their wisdom prevent abuses; but when, notwithstanding their safeguard, excessive dearness happens, administration ought to employ all its resources to temper it; it is to the sovereign in that case that the people have

recourse, it is to *him* alone that they commit themselves, *he* must be the good shepherd, round whom the flock croud, when the fences are thrown down, and dangers surround them; but when the storm is past, liberty ought to resume its strength, and the law its guardianship.

C H A P. IX.

Ideas on the Precautions which the capital City requires.

THE agitation of mind which ought every where to be guarded against, becomes more important in proportion to the magnitude of the cities; the same impressions, which would quickly die away elsewhere, acquire a consistency in a capital of six hundred thousand people. One would be tempted to say that the sensations of the soul are like so many fleeting accents, which, at first imperceptible, become striking by their number.

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AND, in fact, at the walls of Paris will always founder the indefinite liberty, and the indifference about precautions with regard to subsistence; it is not enough that these precautions should be useless for a long time, it behoves that they may be always dispensed with, or else they will be always necessary; such is the condition imposed by all formidable danger, no matter whether it is probable, or simply possible.

THE more we would favour liberty in the commerce of corn, the more indispensable it appears to me to be sure of a sufficient provision for the capital; it would be imprudent, in my eyes, to abandon to the smallest hazard, the tranquillity of that immense multitude who buy their bread every day, and who take no precautions, because they count upon the watchfulness of their superiors; a provision in the proportion we have pointed out, would be very sufficient, and I think it might, by little and little, be laid upon and divided amongst

the bakers, by reconciling this arrangement to their own interest, and assisting them, if necessary.

BUT in the mean time, the wisdom of government may supply the want of it in some other manner; and at the times when this obligatory provision at the bakers, or any other which might be adopted, should appear superfluous, it will, without doubt, not fail to inform itself, without noise, of the quantity of corn which there is within reach of Paris, in order that there may never be the least chance of great inconveniences.

WHATEVER idea may be formed of the power of personal interest, the probable result of those dispersed combinations can never inspire more than an abstract confidence, and that kind of confidence ought never to supersede the precautions of wisdom; but frequently the more men have been benefited by these precautions, the more readily are they ungrateful towards them; the
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effect of an able administration, is to blend itself in a manner with the natural course of things; so that the hand which encourages, which restrains, which repairs, being no longer perceived, they forget its services, and ascribe to chance, or to the necessary result of circumstances, the tranquillity to which a long enjoyment has rendered them insensible. I believe these general reflections may be applied with justice, to the wise administration of the police of corn in the capital, for many years past. How much are we not indebted, without knowing it, to an intelligent and continual vigilance, which, whilst it conceals itself in order to succeed, seems to renounce, that it may do good, the homage of gratitude?

I APPREHEND that one of the reasonings which makes people in general indifferent about any precautions concerning subsistence, is a notion which they have, that dearness is occasioned only by relations which are in-

herent in the nature of things, relations which it is impossible to counteract; but this notion, to me, does not seem just.

IN a scanty year, if all the corn of the new crop, added to what remains of the former, could be laid before our eyes, or equally shared, in all probability there would scarcely ever be either anxiety or dearnefs; but the relation between the quantity and the needs is not known, an idea of it is formed only by conjectures, and it is the variable result of these conjectures, which augments or moderates the pretensions of the sellers.

THE prices then are a compound of reality and imagination. A scanty crop comes, *that* is a real motive for a rise of price; but is not this motive estimated by the imagination? and this imagination itself, by what is it excited? by what is it governed? by the spirit of imitation, by example. These are the masters of us, poor self-conceited children,

dren, and our masters in every thing, we cannot conceal it from ourselves one instant; thus in several circumstances prices may be led, as opinions are.

THESE reflections are sufficient to lay open the influence which the precautions of government would naturally have on the price of corn. Provisions then are useful, both to supply, without any constraint being used, the transient moments of dearth, and to stop sometimes the excess of a rise, by sales at a moderate price, and by the force of example.

BUT, at the same time, I am not of opinion that the provisions in the capital ought to be destined to maintain there continually, by sales *au rabais* *, a more moderate price than the general circumstances

* A kind of inverted auction, in which the auctioneer names a sum, as much or more than the value of the lot to be sold, and then descends, by naming lower sums, by degrees, and the first person who claims it at the price named, is the purchaser: a much more expeditious method than by bidding upwards. *Tr.*

cumstances admit of. Such operations are a kind of constraint which draws on many other kinds; for whilst on the one hand, it stops the natural course of the price of corn in Paris, it becomes necessary on the other, to bring that commodity there by force; whereas all those efforts and all those solitudes would diminish naturally, if the people were by little and little accustomed there to pay as dear for their bread as in other places; and, throwing aside all dastardly circumspection, I will add, that nothing could be more reasonable.

THERE are a sufficient number of inevitable motives which swell the population of the capital, without drawing a useless multitude there by sacrifices; and the administration should renounce with magnanimity, these popular acclamations, which cannot be purchased but by the overthrow of order; these acclamations, besides, can never be the assured effect of the low price of corn, when once it is permanent; it is only
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during the movements which the price makes towards a fall, and some little time after it has stopt, that the people can rejoice in it, for the price of workmanship following that of subsistence, the working men are soon brought back again to the condition from whence they had escaped; a condition which is assigned them by their competition, and by the irresistible force of property.

WE must not then let ourselves be guided by partial considerations, nor make sacrifices to motives foreign to the order of things. It ought to be observed on the contrary, that Paris is the city in France where corn ought to be at the highest price, because that of labour *may* be dear there without any inconveniency; for at the same time that this capital is the center of the greatest riches, it is not a town of commerce with foreign countries, except for some manufactures, the taste and the perfection of which are their principal attraction, and which have no need to be

be favoured by the low price of workmanship; this circumstance is still less necessary, to guard the other labours of the people against any exterior competition, since those labours require the presence of the workman; all their industry being devoted to the conveniences and to the luxury of the wealthy whom Paris contains, and still attracts incessantly from every corner of the world.

BUT habitude in matters relating to subsistence must be respected; so that, even if these different observations should be thought reasonable, they ought not to be carried into execution but very slowly and with infinite management.

IN all countries where the people, without being brutified by slavery, do not concern themselves with either laws or public affairs, it is difficult to reason with them, and dangerous to command them without prudent precautions; you must conduct them like a sensible child, employ more dexterity with them than force, accustom them before you command

mand them, and lead them instead of driving them.

CHAP. X.

On the Æra, which ought to be chosen for the Establishment of a new Law concerning Corn.

IT is in vain to trust to the force of argument, the event will always be the guide of mens opinions; *that* is an instructor whom all the world understands, who excites neither hatred nor jealousy, and with whom every one imagines he has always made connections by his foresight.

IT is then agreeable to wisdom never to make a new law concerning corn, when it is foreseen that inevitable circumstances would excite an alteration in the prices, contrary to the wish of the public; for men will never take the pains to distinguish what arises from
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the crops, from what belongs to the law.

It is more expedient in such case to modify a little that which exists, or to temper the abuses of it by the power of administration; and to seize, for the establishment of a new law, the circumstances which may assist it in the public opinion, or at least defend it in its infancy, against the insults of events.

THIS public opinion weakens or strengthens all human institutions; there are some perhaps which, by their clearness, their sublime wisdom, and their necessity, surmount every obstacle, and resist all the momentary contradictions of experience; but the principles on which the greatest part of economical institutions are founded, are so very abstract, that the wisdom of those laws can never be generally demonstrated, and that they will always have need of being defended by time and by success.

TRUTH however is but one, in political oeconomy as in all other sciences;
but

but who can be sure of attaining unto it! Who can subject to his own conceptions that restless assemblage of sentiments, of passions, and of wills? Alas! How many managements, how many cares, how many sacrifices, are they not still incumbent on a minister, fully convinced of the rectitude of his own plan, when he would wean the people from their former habits?

PRECIPITATION was natural to the legislators of savage countries, which lived under barbarous customs; but in the states of Europe where a police is established, and in France especially, there are few oeconomical institutions, wherein the advantages are not blended with some inconveniences; and there are many more wherein the good is to be distinguished and separated from the bad, than they are to be totally abolished.

NOTWITHSTANDING all the complaints which have existed, and which alas! will exist forever (because the laws
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of property doom the most numerous class of a nation to have only bare necessities,) we cannot impose on ourselves so far as not to acknowledge, that the prosperity of France is greater than it ever was; her population and her wealth, those two general and certain standards, suffice to convince us of it; this prosperity exacts great circumspection in the promulgation of new laws; for we must never make anatomical experiments on living bodies.

C H A P. XI.

On the Manner of studying the Questions concerning Corn, and political OEconomy in general.

TO invite all men to the discussion of useful truths, is a fine idea, and it is a sign of magnanimity to permit it; but may none of those who present themselves to this noble competition, ever forget that there are truths which

which may change themselves into errors, according to the manner in which they are studied; all those of political oeconomy which depend on administration, are particularly easy to be thus travestied; they are composed of a multitude of rays, whose action and power we cannot know, but by uniting them in our meditation. But the art of the sophist is a prism which separates and decomposes them; as often as this is employed, men multiply errors and contradictions at will; and they easily impress on the dispersed portions of one great whole, the character and form which they please to give them.

It is the question of corn which, above all others, gives room to this subtilty of reasoning; the great principles on which it depends, have consequences so wide spread and so numerous, that it is extremely easy to separate the principal ideas from their relations, and to set up, in a manner, the effects in opposition to their own causes.

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WHEN a man studies these matters with a sincere mind, he ought never servilely to follow any beaten tract, nor is it as to an imperious guide that he must have recourse to the ideas of others, but as to an object of comparison, useful after his own enquiries; for it is only by the force of meditation, that he can render himself master of the abstract truths of political economy; it is only at this price that they insinuate themselves into our understanding, and become as it were the property of our mind.

I would advise him likewise to lay aside for a long time, in the examination of the question of corn, the ideas of money; this invention, so commodious for commerce, has thrown upon the theory of it all the embarrassment from which it hath freed its practice; he must not unite the observations on the effect of money, to the study of the general principles, till after he has considered what the political

tical relations would be, independant of that sign adopted by all nations, but which nevertheless is only a sign, expressing or denoting the goods really useful or agreeable to men.

He must next guard himself carefully against the illusions of vanity, which persuades us that we have seen all, when we have looked on for a few moments; and which wreathing us with laurels at the beginning of the course, dispenses us from running it.

SOMETIMES also, in order to attain to truth without any effort, men separate it from all human passions, and keep it captive between some principles which they have laid down themselves, and they think they have vanquished all the difficulties, which they have concealed from their own eyes. They seem to me in this case to imitate those lazy sportsmen or young beginners, who tie to the foot of a tree, a poor animal which would have defied them in the field, and if they hit it in this motion-

less situation, they applaud their own skill and cleverness.

IT likewise often happens that on the first discoveries which our mind makes, we stop to explain them to others, to magnify them in their eyes, if we can, and to dispute without mercy on the degree of glory which we ought to reap from them. This little way of acting is repugnant to all advancement, which never is the prize of any thing but a constant series of observations, and a perseverance of thought.

IN fine, men neglect details too much in all questions of administration; as if they were below our nature, as if nothing but mighty springs could move us, as if he who thinks himself the most at liberty, was not habitually in the trammels of a number of slender threads, which govern him without his suspecting it. Yet it is the knowledge of those various details, which gives sometimes so much advantage to very moderate men, and which often sub-
jects

jects to them, even genius itself, when it would carry its designs into execution.

WE must guard ourselves against these different shelves, in order to study with success the abstract questions which are applicable to administration, and which ought thus to unite the theory and the practice. It is for want of a just solicitude, that whilst a man frequently embraces only a phantom, the child of his weakness, or of his imagination, he thinks himself the possessor of the oeconomical science, and of the source of all light.

BUT long will it be ere any man will have a good title to such a persuasion; and those who have meditated much on these subjects, would hesitate to communicate their reflections, if it was not permitted to do it with a proper doubt and diffidence. But why should they be afraid of doing it? If there are errors which lead men to the truth, they may still, even when they are mistaken, hope to be useful.

C H A P. XII.

Conclusion.

WHEN we fix our thoughts on society, and the relations of it, we are struck with a general idea which well deserves to be thoroughly considered; it is, that almost all civil institutions have been made for the proprietors. One is frightened, on opening the code of laws, to find throughout nothing but proofs of this truth. One would be tempted to say that a small number of men, after they had shared the earth between them, had made laws to unite themselves, and guarantee each other, against the multitude, as they would make up strong fences in the woods, to defend themselves against the wild beasts. However, it may be boldly said, after having established the laws of property, of justice, and of liberty, nothing is yet done for the most numerous class of men.

men. What good do your laws of property to us? might they say; we possess nothing. Your laws of justice? We have nothing to defend. Your laws of liberty? If we do not work to-morrow, we die.

A GREAT truth however appears from these reflections; it is that the institutions of police and the laws of administration, are almost the only ones which defend the people. A sage and paternal distribution of imposts; intelligent laws on the circulation of corn, the continual care that is taken of indigence, the succour which is more extensively spread in times of dearth; these are the salutary dispensations, which have the greatest influence on the lot of the multitude.

THE beneficence of sovereigns does not depend solely, then, upon their justice; it is likewise on their talents, on the extent of their lights, and on their prudence; it is also on their continual vigilance, on their tender concern,

cern, on those paternal cares, which the law of justice doth not indicate, but which are written in letters of fire in every breast affected with the welfare of mankind. O ye who govern, never forget that the most numerous part of men was not called to the formation of the laws; that, condemned to continual labour, they do not participate in the lights which diffuse themselves; that therefore their weakness and their deserted condition, incessantly demands your patronage. Those who have a share of the goods of the earth, will ask of you only liberty, and justice; those who have nothing, have need of your humanity, of your compassion, of laws of police in a word, which may temper towards them the power of property; and since bare necessities is their only good, the care of obtaining it, their only thought; it is, above all, by the wisdom of the laws concerning corn, that you may best advance their welfare and their quiet.

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LET meditation then never cease to be exercised on this important object; may there one day result from it, a general light and permanent truths, which, whilst they assure the quiet and the prosperity of the state, may become also the safeguard of the weak against the powerful.

I HAVE sought for these truths, without any spirit of party, without prejudice, and without fear; but I dare not be positive of any thing but of my endeavours. Yet one thing there is of which I think I am sure, namely that moderation is the essential condition of all wise administration, and of all durable legislation, in matters concerning subsistence.

I DO not know whether that moderation may succeed as well in matters of opinion; what our feelings have made us hate, *that* our mind condemns; and when we follow the traces of truth, without going beyond it, when we conform to her waving path, we often

please nobody. There must be some excess if you would captivate ; you must wear a white feather in your hat if you would make people follow you : men love to class all opinions under a party word, and it is that *word* which attaches them or drives them away. But can a man love truth, and yet use so much artifice ? Of all sacrifices of our opinion, the most base, without doubt, is that which we make to public favour, as it is always without any danger.

The E N D.



